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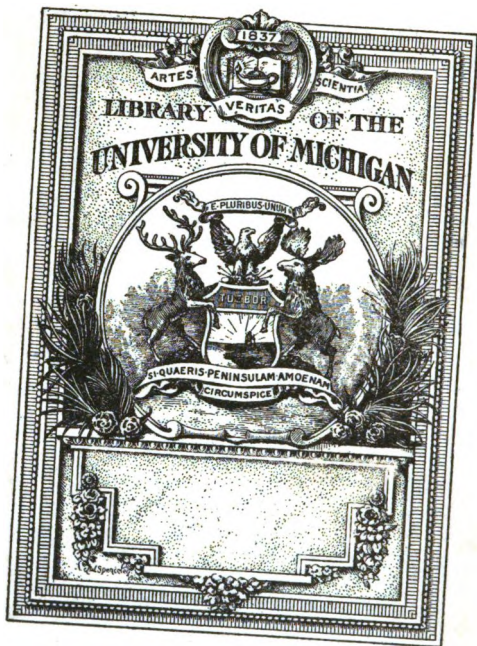
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**LOVE AND PRIDE.**



L O N D O N :  
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# LOVE AND PRIDE.

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BY THE  
AUTHOR OF "SAYINGS AND DOINGS,"  
ETC.

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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# SNOWDON.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

IN Grosvenor-square, things were rapidly drawing to a crisis. Madame Maradan Carsan had already sent home a great portion of the *trousseau*. Already had "the four dozen of everything," the prescribed twelve morning dresses, the ordained six evening dresses, and the well-stored *sachet*, made their appearance. Acceptances of their invitations had been received from all the guests; the "elegant travelling carriage," of which the town was soon to read in the Morning Post, had received the last finishing touch; and the Marquess himself had in-



spected the many-quartered shield, which Hobson's best of artists, had painted and emblazoned with the greatest skill and the nicest accuracy.

Lord Snowdon had received a brief and hasty answer from Lord Malvern to the letter, which, as we know, caught him at Tours ; in which the obedient son announced his intention of being in London as soon as possible, giving that as the very strongest reason for saying little else in writing. The days were calculated by the Marquess with an astrological carefulness, so that his son might arrive just at the moment when he was surrounded by his new connexions ; and the Oldhams, and Lord Elmsdale, together with one or two cousins of the family, were invited to dinner on the particular Tuesday on which his dear " Malvern " was to reach home ; and then there was, of course, to be a scene, a little " effect." And if it had all happened as his Lordship intended, and Lord Malvern had on a sudden been introduced to Elizabeth as his future mother-in-law, it is extremely probable that the " effect " would have



been much more striking, than even the Marquess himself anticipated.

This great design, however, was destined, like most of the noble Marquess's contrivances, to fail; for on the morning of this "to have been" auspicious day, arrived the two letters from Paris, at the sealing and despatching of which the reader has been present.

To attempt a description of the consternation and rage of Lord Snowdon would be vain—to paint the wretchedness of Lady Hester equally so—upon the receipt of these missives. Lord Malvern's address to his father was moderate and temperate, but firm and determined. He expressed to him the same sentiments as those which he had avowed to Burford, announced his perfect readiness to enter into every arrangement calculated to secure his father's happiness, at the same time venturing a doubt of its attainment by the particular measure he proposed to adopt; leaving the real cause of his apprehension, the previous attachment of Miss Oldham to himself, of course wholly out of sight. This



part of the communication, however, puzzled his noble parent more than any other. His son, although he did not object generally to the principle of his second marriage, seemed to dwell with great emphasis upon the unfortunate circumstance of his choice of that particular person.

This was a mystery to the Marquess: he could not comprehend why the granddaughter of an Earl, and of one of the most ancient families, amiable, handsome, and accomplished, could be any thing but a desirable match, if the principle of his marrying again were once admitted. Lord Malvern's refusal to participate in any of the proceedings connected with the affair made him furious; but more furious was he, if possible, at his refusal to be present at his sister's nuptials: it would infallibly proclaim to the world that a difference existed in the family, that the Plinlimmons were subject to the frailties of humanity, and that their domestic felicity was not perfect. Besides, what had the one event to do with the other? or why, with the readiness which he expressed to



meet his views in every other way, should his son take that step, which, most of all, must mark to society a pointed and personal dislike and disrespect for the particular individual of his father's choice?

Of Lord Malvern's opinion of Lord Elmsdale, Lord Snowdon was previously aware. He knew that he did not particularly like him: but nobody could dislike him sufficiently to put an indignity upon him, or treat him with neglect, and even contempt, all of which the Marquess considered his son to do, by declining to sanction his union with his sister, and by neglecting, after having come to such a determination, even to write an ordinarily civil and congratulatory letter to him upon the occasion of his becoming so nearly connected with the family. But most of all, was the Marquess angry, for that all these circumstances combined, produced the entire discomfiture of his designs for the "effect" of the day, and reduced him to the painful necessity of announcing to his connexions in full divan, the resolution of his dutiful and obedient son, the



most exemplary child upon earth except his sister,) not to obey his father's wishes, or grace with his countenance and presence, the consummation of the family felicity.

Lady Hester read her brother's letter, hastily and tremblingly, for she dreaded the sudden appearance of her noble sire, and perhaps his command to show him the epistle. His inquiries about Elizabeth were many and minute. His indignation at all the circumstances connected with the affair, was expressed in no gentle terms. He implored Lady Hester to write to him, and tell him all she could collect of Miss Oldham's real feelings and views, and her own genuine opinion with regard to herself and the position in which she was placed. He entreated her to be candid, expressed an implied disinclination towards Lord Elmsdale, and requested her, if she felt as he apprehended she did, even at the late period which had arrived, to resist the completion of the arrangement, using to her the same justification for rebellion against their father, as he had adopted in his conversation with Burford,



and avowing it as a principle which he would vindicate and maintain at all hazards, that the forcing of hearts into worldly marriages, was a crime worse in its character than murder.

He wrote, as may be imagined, under highly excited feelings; and, irritated out of his prudence, gave utterance to ultra-violent sentiments, which startled the agonized Lady Hester, who, while she dreaded the intemperance which characterised his letter, felt what deadly truth his words conveyed. All that could console her in her hapless case, was the fact that Burford was not to perform the ceremony; and this announcement Lord Malvern made to his sister in language which filled her with fear and wonder—it was all too late for hope.

“By my determination,” wrote Lord Malvern, “my friend, my excellent friend, Burford, escapes the task of uniting you to Lord Elmsdale. With his feelings for all of us, and with a conviction of the results of this match entirely agreeing with mine, what a duty it would have been for him to perform. If I know any thing



of your real feelings, the circumstance would have been equally painful to you. As far as I am concerned, I should have rejoiced if that worthy, honourable fellow, had occupied a very different position relatively to my sister in such a ceremonial. What a misfortune it is that nature is so seldom permitted to assert her claims. Do not think, dearest Hester, that I mean to reproach you with want of moral courage or firmness in a just cause; but if I understand your heart, and can judge with any fairness of your inclinations, you ought peremptorily to have refused the offer of your intended husband. This is my own unbiassed opinion; for you may be sure that upon this particular subject I could not ask Burford's opinion, nor could he give one with the hope of my allowing him any credit for impartiality."

This part of her brother's letter, Lady Hester read, and re-read—it seemed to her full of danger, full of mystery—yet it sounded sweetly to her ears. Was it possible that Lord Malvern really was aware of her affection for Burford?—



“She had never told her love.” Did he mean to say, that if she had refused Lord Elmsdale and succeeded in frustrating the match, that he would have espoused her cause? or did he go the length of encouraging her to hope that, if she had been sufficiently resolute in that particular, he would have justified and protected her in marrying the last man on earth with whom his father would have sanctioned her union.

That he was aware of the circumstances in which she was placed seemed certain; and yet, where was the use, where the advantage of speculating upon such visionary fancies? In a few days more, she would be Lady Elmsdale. Yes, before it was possible for Alfred to receive her letter, and return an answer. Why had he touched upon the subject *then*? Why had he not alluded to it earlier? *We* know why he had not, because we know the period at which he first became acquainted with Burford’s sentiments. She, poor soul, did not. And it is scarcely possible to describe the state of mind into which she was



thrown, by what almost appeared the cruelty of her devoted brother.

Lady Hester felt, however, that she had a duty to perform which must be done immediately. She resolved, therefore, to exclude all visitors, until she had answered the letter which had so dreadfully excited and so seriously agitated her. This answer shall presently be submitted to the reader, as conveying an accurate and authentic state of the family circle on the eve of the two events, which were destined to increase its sphere and shake it to its centre.

Meanwhile, Lord Snowdon, after considering and cogitating, for a long time, as to the best method of concealing his anger and disappointment, decided upon the course he should pursue. It so happened, that he never inquired whether Lady Hester had received any letter from her brother, and that it never struck him as probable that she had. The junior branches of his house—as the under-bred misses of the suburban boarding-schools, are taught never to speak till they are



spoken to, or permitted to ask for what they want till they are asked to have it—were trained to silent obedience: so that as it did not occur to Lord Snowdon that his son had written to any body except himself, he made no inquiry; and upon the principle of the establishment, when Lady Hester met her father, she, of course, did not mention the circumstance to *him*, gladly availing herself of his silence to keep to herself a communication, which, if he had desired to see it, she could not have refused to show him, and which, if he had seen it, would have set the smouldering embers of his passion into a blaze.

As it was, Lady Hester's surprise and pleasure—if pleasure she could just then feel at any thing—were by no means small, when she perceived her magnificent parent stalk into the drawing-room, with an air of graceful tranquillity and unruffled dignity. No mark of anger or disappointment was on his brow. All seemed smooth and calm. She yet dreaded that the appearance might be deceitful—if it were so, the *plating* was extremely thick, for he entered into general



conversation about the nothings of the day with his daughter and Miss Everingham, and concluded the interview, by a simple inquiry at what time Lady Hester had ordered the carriage.

It was after this—to Lady Hester—astonishing scene, that she concluded and despatched her letter to Paris. Lord Snowdon had written also. But he had a friend in the Foreign Office, and as he did not at all dislike being seen in the neighbourhood of that admirably conducted department, he ordered his carriage, drove to the door, visited his friend, a “convenient” subordinate, and remained to waste at least half an hour of the public time, in a common-place dialogue with the highly honoured functionary, merely for the chance of having it announced by the Court Newsman in the next day’s paper, that “yesterday the Marquess of Snowdon transacted business at the Foreign Office.” Half the official visits so recorded, have their origin in matters of about as much importance.

Lady Hester’s despatch went by the ordinary post, and was thus written :—



“ *Grosvenor Square* — — —

“ DEAREST MALVERN,

“ What I am to say in answer to your long and deeply-interesting letter, I know not. I have so much to tell you, and so little time or space for explanations. I can entirely enter into your feelings about Elizabeth. Your astonishment at the intelligence I can easily imagine—it is altogether a dreadful affair, and I am sure, and so is Anne, must end ill. I speak now really and truly without any of that prejudice, which you may very naturally suppose I might have against such a marriage. But I must tell you, that the very cause of our apprehensions for my father’s happiness, ought to relieve you of those regrets, which the sudden disappointment of your hopes about Elizabeth might otherwise have caused you.

“ I have had several conversations with her—if conversations they may be called—in which, not by her confessions, not even by her words, but by her manner, and the general tenor of her conduct, I have convinced myself, that the plea-



sure she appeared to feel in your society, was all assumed. She was then too young to play a part without entering into something like its real feeling, but the last few months have strongly and strangely developed her character and matured her principles, if principles they may be called.

“To her advancement in life, or to mine, I must attribute the entire alteration of my views and opinions concerning her : either she was too young *then* to be so heartless as she is *now*, or I was too young to perceive her faults. I have spoken to her of you,—a somewhat delicate subject, as I felt it ; but her replies convinced me that I had nothing to fear in alluding to the subject, and that she either never felt that regard for you, which her apparently artless and affectionate manner induced us to think she did, or that something has occurred to obliterate the recollection of those days, and induce her voluntarily to enter our house in a very different position from that which she had, at that period, assigned her.



“She has lived latterly much with foreigners : her air and manner are bold and forward ; she talks fast and loudly, even to my father, whom she has begun to call ‘ Dear.’ Of her influence over him and its extent, you will best judge by knowing that he not only endures this gentle familiarity, but evidently is pleased with it. It must be a very powerful feeling of devotion on his part, which could induce him to bear so rapid a stride towards equality in the daughter, combined with the incessant nonsensical jargon of the mother, who to me is of all odious people in the world, the most detestable.

“They have in their family a pet man—a Mr. Frederic Richardson, whom they think perfection. He is constantly deferred to, upon every occasion ; and being quartered at Hampton Court, finds their house at Richmond an agreeable *séjour* when he is not engaged by duty. I think Papa hates him. He began by being extremely courteous to him ; but Mr. Richardson mistook his condescension for good fellowship, and begins now to play with the lion : I am quite sure that



some day he will get a pat which he will remember for the rest of his life. He is extremely forward, and I think vulgar; he calls Elizabeth by her Christian name, and *pooh poohs* Lady Katharine with the most unqualified impudence. In fact, I see nothing but misery for my poor father in the connexion; but, as far as you are concerned, I see—and, since the misery must be inflicted *malgré nous*, it is a great consolation—that your happiness with such a girl as she has become, would have been equally problematical; therefore, dear Malvern, accept the only balm I can afford, if it be balm to a heart that once has loved, to find it had been betrayed.

“You will expect me to say something of myself. Had you been in England I might have ventured upon the refusal you now too late advise; and yet, to have lived under the ban of a father’s curse—and it would inevitably have fallen on me—I could not endure. I dare not at this period permit myself to answer that part of your letter which relates to Lord Elmsdale. In a few days he will be my husband; and by the blessing



of that Providence upon which I have from my earliest youth implicitly relied, I will be the obedient, dutiful, and affectionate wife, that I shall solemnly pledge myself to be. I must seem an ungrateful girl even in making this profession; for when I examine my heart, I can find no fault with Elmsdale: every body speaks well of him; he is amiable, and as far as I know, good—would that he had made choice of some one who could better appreciate his estimable qualities. I certainly hoped, in marriage, for something more congenial with my own disposition—but, dearest Malvern, trust your devoted sister, she will fulfil her duty faithfully, and time may ripen esteem and gratitude into a warmer feeling.

“ You speak of Mr. Burford’s escape from the performance of the marriage ceremony as very agreeable to *him*; to me the substitution of any other clergyman is a most important relief, because he is associated in my mind with yourself—so intimately connected in my recollection with all those scenes, which, least of all, I should wish to be recalled to my memory at the awful



moment which must now so shortly arrive; that it would indeed have added, painfully and considerably to the difficulty of my position, in a degree that I cannot describe even to you. Make my best, my kindest remembrances to him, as *your* friend. I noticed the emphasis, and rejoiced to see it. As *your* friend he must always be dear to me; and although after a few short days have passed, I may not honourably avow an interest for any, but one, I am yet free to assure him of my constant regard, and a recollection, through life, of the kindness and attention I have ever received from him, and of that care and friendship for *you*, which I so thankfully feel and you so justly appreciate.

“I was waiting to close this, until I had seen my father, and heard his opinion and determination upon your letter. He has been in the drawing-room with Anne and myself, has talked on ordinary subjects, but never uttered one syllable either about you or your communication. How he means to act of course I cannot imagine.



A great family party is invited here, to-day, to meet and receive you, and I am most anxious to know what he will do. It has been a great relief to me that he never inquired whether I had heard from you; nor do I know whether you wrote to Elmsdale—he expected that you would have done so: I cannot say I did—if I can write before *the* day I will.

“ You of course have heard of the failure of our *fête* at Lionsden,—it was a signal discomfiture. But it is very curious,—I hear that my father has been a good deal engaged in politics since our return to town—of course not a word from himself; but Lady Ticehurst—one of the cleverest and most agreeable women I ever met with, and who knows more of what is going on, than anybody in London—tells me, that he has actually got the promise of the Governor-generalship of India. Do not for the world allude to this in any way—it may not be true; but he has dined with the minister since our arrival in London, and I have seen two or three official men at dinner here, whose faces I never saw in



our house before. If it should be so, Elizabeth will become an oriental Queen ; which I think is as likely to turn such a head as her's, as anything one can well imagine.

“ Think of me, pray for me, dearest Malvern : to have had you here would have been a great comfort—and yet—no—I am sure it is best as it is. I am able to moderate my feelings of disinclination to this marriage, by the recollection of what is so soon to succeed it, in the family arrangements ; to have Elizabeth Oldham as she is, Marchioness of Snowdon, would be unbearable. Poor Anne Everingham is more wretched than anybody else at her approaching elevation. Anne never, till the present moment, entirely relinquished the idea that she had a powerful interest with the Marquess, and sometimes, as I fancy, entertained a distant idea of becoming my mother-in-law herself. She knows no bounds in declaiming against the intended Marchioness, and denounces her as the most inveterate flirt, and detestable coquette ; and to see the expression of her countenance when Elizabeth calls



Papa 'Dear,' would make anybody even more wretched than myself smile through her grief.

"Once more, adieu, dear Malvern; remember I write in great haste—in great fear—in great grief—and in the strictest confidence. Let me know of your speedy recovery—let me at least hear that you are well and happy;—cast away all thought of the heartless conqueror of your young heart, and seek for some object worthy of you: if you doubt, be guided by Mr. Burford's taste and judgment, and you cannot do wrong. Farewell—farewell.

"Affectionately yours,

"HESTER PLINLIMMON."

This letter, sealed, addressed, and despatched, the fair writer felt her mind greatly relieved. She dare not read what she had written. The part which referred to Burford terrified her; she could not bear to pass over his much-loved name in utter silence—she could not endure eternally to sever the tie which bound her to him, without one word of "adieu;" and yet she feared that she



had permitted herself to express her feelings more warmly than was consistent with her present character. Should she re-read it?—should she re-write it?—no—let it go—it was the genuine outpouring of a warm and affectionate heart, whose impulses she could safely trust, while under the controul of a pious and well-regulated mind: it was all over—the pang was ended, and Burford was no longer anything to her.

It was not until dinner-time that Lady Hester again saw the Marquess. Lord Elmsdale had been smiling gently, and whispering pretty platitudes for an hour before dinner; and had even gone the length of trying a pair of bracelets on Lady Hester's arms, which she had chosen from a brilliant *recueil* placed before her by the jeweller. The ring too was selected—that ring, which was to bind her to her lord and master through life:—it seemed all like a dreadful dream; but it continued, and Lady Hester awakened not from it.

The party assembled—the dinner proceeded,



and still the Marquess said not a word about his son, until the ladies were on the point of retiring. The conversation had continued with its wonted restraint, and no mention had been made of Lord Malvern, much to the astonishment of Lady Hester, who began to think that her father had not received the letter which her brother told her he had sent. The truth is, that the Marquess had determined to treat his son's absence as a matter of no importance; and although he knew it would be necessary, because it would seem natural, to touch upon the subject before the party separated, it required time, wine, and preparation, to work him up, or perhaps down, into a placidity which he considered it right to assume, in speaking of a point on which he had received so sharp and deep a wound—at length the effort was made.

“I am sorry, Elmsdale,” said the Marquess, “that poor Malvern is unable to come to us.”

“Indeed!” said his Lordship; “ill?”

“Exactly so,” said Lord Snowdon; “he has had some attack at Paris on his way hither from



Tours, and his medical people positively interdict his moving."

Lady Hester looked at her father as he told this decided untruth, and thought she never beheld his high-mightiness look so exceedingly small.

"I did not like to mention this, before dinner," continued the Marquess; "his illness he writes me word is not serious, but from what his doctor says, I should not think he will recover sufficiently to travel for some time."

As his Lordship was "in for it," he fancied he might as well increase the imaginary sickness of his son to a sufficient degree, to render his absence from the second marriage in the family no more remarkable to the "world," than his non-appearance at the first.

"It is a sad blow upon you, Hester dear, I know," said the Marquess; "he desires his affectionate love to you,—his best regards to you, Lord Elmsdale; and many of the same sort of remembrances he sends to you, Lady Katharine, and to you Elizabeth."



Lady Hester was astounded; she could not help exchanging a look with Anne, which, if it had been detected by the ‘illustrious,’ would have betrayed to his keen and acute mind, that he had been “found out” by his favourite child and her favourite friend; luckily, however, the last part of his speech was addressed to his intended wife, who sat on his right hand, and he did not see the telegraphing which was going on at the other end of the table.

“Dear, dear,” said Lady Katharine, “I hope nothing serious is the matter with him,—I have no great faith in French doctors; the only one I ever knew personally was a Doctor Laballe, he was a cousin of one of the Montmorencis, a very great creature in his time. By-the-way, that Miss Dancer, who afterwards married the man who did something particular in Ireland,—I recollect her father was a banker; he was in Parliament once—and was poor dear Mr. Oldham’s colleague; they were returned together in opposition to Lord Drumbuggle’s interest, which



interest by the way, he secured, by marrying Miss Polsden, who was the——

“Hester, dear——” said the Marquess, having for a minute at least, endeavoured to catch her eye.

The words, and the tone in which they were uttered, announced to Lady Hester that her hour was come, and that she must go; for Lady Katharine’s tirades had now become unbearable to Lord Snowdon; and with all his grace and dignity he did not consider it necessary to conceal how much they ‘bored’ him by anything like attention to them; on the contrary, if it were possible, he took the most decisive steps for either cutting them short, or avoiding them altogether.

As Lady Katharine upon the present occasion was not first in rank, and the hint of Lord Snowdon to his daughter was overheard by the lady who actually was placed in that position, the party was abruptly dissolved, just as the pedigree of the Polsdens was commenced. Lady Katharine, however, was not to be beaten so



easily; and as the ladies passed away from the dinner-room, she might have been heard explaining why French physicians were not to be trusted, until her breath was exhausted, and her history terminated just at the drawing-room door by an eulogy upon Taglioni's dancing, and her Ladyship's wonderment at the construction of the Thames Tunnel.

"One change," said Lord Snowdon to Lord Elmsdale after the ladies were gone, "must be made in our proceedings in consequence of poor Malvern's illness; we are deprived of my chaplain's services—he cannot spare him. Mr. Burford is a good creature, and has made himself so useful and essential to my son, that at such a period it would be cruel to deprive him of his society. It is a sad thing upon that person himself, for of course it would have been a most agreeable and gratifying thing to him, to have had so important a share in securing Hester's happiness; however, I would not hear of it; and I have written to the Bishop of Dorchester, who had previously volunteered his services,



and who is an old friend of Hester's, and will, of course, as I have written to him, officiate."

"Good," said Lord Elmsdale, and sipped his wine.

"I think, upon the whole, it may look better," said the Marquess, "having a Bishop."

"Yes," answered the son-in-law, who three days before had said yes to exactly the opposite proposition.

"I have desired them," continued the Marquess, "to order horses for you down the road, and I trust you will find everything comfortable at the castle."

"Umph," said Lord Elmsdale, looking very much obliged.

Lord Elmsdale said nothing more; and the other two guests who had whispered a little conversation to each other, looked sufficiently uncomfortable to justify the Marquess in proposing to go to coffee, and the party forthwith measured their course towards the ladies, none of whom appeared in better spirits, nor more inclined to sociability than the new arrivals from below had



been before. Lady Hester felt herself degraded by the detection of her father's evident disregard for truth, and worried at the concealment of the real cause of Lord Malvern's absence. She watched the countenance of Miss Oldham when his name was mentioned, and saw no symptom of the slightest care or recollection of him. In the then temper of her mind, it was impossible for her to associate with her future mother-in-law without restraint; while Lady Katharine attributing the evident coldness of Lady Hester, to a feeling of dislike of the intended connexion, took every opportunity of setting her own dear Elizabeth up, as the standard of perfection, corroborating all her highest flights of praise, by citing Mr. Frederick Richardson as an unquestionable authority in favour of her daughter's excellence.

This, which had something of the bathos in it, and seemed not very dissimilar to the needless absurdity which the infallible Pope commits by confessing his own sins to his own little dirty-faced, ragged-tailed fallible priest—having the omnipotent power of universal forgive-



ness in his own hands—more provoked Lady Hester than anything else in the whole affair. That a dandy of the fourth class, at the highest, should be perpetually brought forward and held up as the arbiter upon all discussable points in the family, seemed not only so foolish but so indelicate, that if her own sorrows had not almost entirely occupied her mind, it would have required the full exertion of all her gentleness and philosophy, to keep her from expressing her opinion of a line of conduct upon which two opinions could not in fact exist.

From the evening now alluded to, till the wedding-day, a very short period would intervene; still, near as the event was, it seemed to Lady Hester's mind impossible that it should occur: it seemed impossible that in a very few days more, she should be united for life to the man whom she saw standing listening to her father's declamation upon politics, apparently neither feeling nor understanding the point or object of his eloquence, taking no share in the discussion, nor indeed interest in anything;



that for the rest of her natural life she was to be his companion in sickness and in health, to love, honour, and obey him. It seemed as if it were all an imposition, a deceit, a vision.—When she retired to her dressing-room, and found there, the splendid evidence of preparation for the ceremony, which was so soon to unite them eternally, a pang struck to her heart—she sickened at the sight, and when, after grasping in her trembling hands, the ornaments destined to adorn her person on the fatal morning of her wretched marriage, she threw them from her—her eyes filled with tears, and she sank upon her couch in an agony of grief.

The culprit destined to die, feels how swiftly those hours fly which precede his execution; his courage exerted, his nerves braced, and his mind made up, he meets the blow with fortitude, and ends the horrid night by dying. But she who lingers through the same space of time, and hears at length the merry peal of mirth summoning her to church, instead of the tolling bell announcing the approach of death, has no



such termination to her pangs in view. She commences a new life after the death-blow of her hopes has fallen; years of prospective misery are before her—of misery heightened by the sad reflection of what she has lost—and she kneels before her Maker, and registers an oath to fulfil all the most important duties of her existence, in acknowledged opposition to the strongest passions and the warmest feelings of her nature.

This was the prospect before poor Lady Hester, to this was she driven by the fear of a father, who loved her as much as he could love anything beside himself; a fear founded on the knowledge of his imperious disposition, his unmitigable pride, and his personal vanity, which she too well knew would induce him to denounce irrevocably any human being, who might act either as principal or accessory, in any measure calculated to unsettle what he had previously arranged, or alter or qualify what he had before decided upon.

If Lord Snowdon could have believed that his daughter was destined to be unhappy for life,



because she married Lord Elmsdale, the chances were considerably in favour of his not forcing her inclinations ; but his vanity of an imaginary superiority of intellect, always led him to believe that he, of himself, knew better what was calculated to make the happiness of others, than they themselves. His view of the case was, that Lady Hester, even at her time of life and under her circumstances, however superior to every body else of her age, or standing in society, was incapable of judging what was necessary to secure her comfort through life. *He* knew the excellence of Lord Elmsdale's character, the extent of his fortune, the value of his influence, and the importance of his connexions. As for the man—the individual man, so long as he had the necessary number of legs and arms, and eyes, and ears, to pass muster with his fellow-creatures, his Lordship did not pause to inquire whether he, the man of himself, was personally agreeable to his daughter. And certainly, if he had been much interested in that part of the subject, he would have had plenty of opportunities of forming



the opinion that he was not. He believed he had secured her happiness; and having so made up his mind, all the rest was to be left to fate, and his will and pleasure were to be executed without either question or discussion.

The train of evils which a refusal of this "suitable offer," would have brought with it, had therefore driven the unfortunate bride into her present position. She was sure, as she had all along felt, that resistance to her father's command, would produce a rigid examination by him, of the actual state of her heart. Her acknowledgment would have been the double ruin of her happiness, and of that of the real object of her affections. In his anger, Lord Snowdon would have set no limits to his revenge for the indignity offered to his house and family, by the subordinate acceptor of his kindness, the smooth-tongued creature of his bounty; and the result would have been, that instead of one broken heart there would have been two, and poor Lady Hester would have lingered in the world, conscious of having rendered miserable



for life, the being for whom, of all created beings, she felt the tenderest regard.

The whole of the next two or three days the Marquess was occupied in arranging the proceedings of the wedding. Town was still empty—it would look extremely well to have a good attendance. At length, puzzled how to put the affair as it ought to be, he went the length of writing, with his own proper hand, a prospective account of the proceedings. Strange as it may seem, his elastic mind, like the trunk of the elephant, could break down oaks or pick up pins; and accordingly, before dinner on the Sunday, he had concocted the following history, which, not choosing to trust any body in his establishment with the fact of his authorship, he copied four several times; and having enclosed those copies in covers, addressed them to the Morning Post, the Times, the Chronicle, and the Herald, slipped them, unseen by mortal eye, into the box of the two-penny post-office at the corner of Albemarle-street, as he condescendingly walked home from Brookes's, on the



night preceding the ceremonial so minutely detailed.

The literary trifle, which entitles his Lordship to a place amongst our "noble authors," ran as follows:—

**"MARRIAGE IN HIGH LIFE.**

"Yesterday morning was married at St. George's, Hanover-square, by special licence, the Right Hon. the Earl of Elmsdale, to the Right Hon. Lady Hester Plinlimmon, the lovely daughter of the Most Noble the Marquess of Snowdon.

"The ceremony was performed by the Lord Bishop of Dorchester, who arrived in town from his episcopal palace for the purpose.

"There were present the Duke and Duchess of St. Leonard's, and Lady Anne Pennyfather; the Earl and Countess of Hungerford; the Earl and Countess of Haversham; Lord and Lady Warrington; Lord Sillyman; Lord and Lady Roughshod, and the Hon. Miss Clapper; Lady



Katharine, and Miss Oldham; Sir George and Lady Chimney-pot; Colonel and Lady Elizabeth Windmill; Sir Francis Macgrizzle, Mr. Toad-man, Mr. Frederick Richardson, Mr. Dancer; Count Cockadolgey, Baron Von Snuffenburg, and several others of the foreign ministers.

“Immediately after the marriage, the party proceeded to Grosvenor-square, where numerous other guests were waiting its arrival, and the company sat down at one o’clock, to a *déjeûné-à-la-fourchette*, comprising all the delicacies of the season, the whole of which was served upon the magnificent service of gold plate, used on the occasion of the late royal visit to Lionsden Castle.

“The bride, who appeared in excellent health and spirits, was dressed in magnificent Valenciennes lace, and looked extremely handsome. At about two, the new married couple, having previously changed their costume, left town for Lionsden, in a new and elegant travelling-carriage, drawn by four horses belonging to the celebrated stud of the noble bridegroom.



“ The company, amounting to upwards of forty, then separated.”

The realization of all this programme was now indeed near at hand; and on Sunday, after a day as unlike in all its circumstances to that which the “ day before the wedding,” might be supposed to be, poor Lady Hester retired to her room to seek her pillow, as Moore says,

“ The last time she e'er was to press it alone.”

Miss Everingham wished to stay with her and talk over the embarrassing peculiarities of her situation; but Lady Hester declined her society much as she valued it: she had made up her mind—all discussion was useless—all resistance now would be out of the question—and like one devoted, she preferred to pass the waking hours of the night in prayer and preparation, for what the world was to believe the happy ceremony of the following morning.

The day dawned and grew, and Lady Hester's maid came to her, and the ordinary routine of



the toilette began. Miss Everingham visited her unhappy friend before she had finished dressing, and a brief conversation ensued, which, whatever the details might have been, was ill-calculated to assuage or fortify the feelings of the reluctant bride. The increasing noise and hurry amongst the establishment, proclaimed the already begun arrivals of some of the invited guests ; and in a few minutes, the Marquess himself was at the door of her dressing-room, to know if he could speak to her.

Hester admitted him, and he kissed the cold forehead of his miserable daughter.

“ My dear child,” said his Lordship, “ I could not permit you to see our friends, until I had begged you to accept, as a mark of a father’s affection and esteem, this little *cadeau*,” placing in her hand a beautiful set of pearls. “ Elmsdale had the first claim to present you with marriage gifts ; it is reserved for *me* to entreat you sometimes to wear these, and think of a parent, whose happiness is so deeply involved in that of his child.”



Lady Hester could make no reply. To think that the father who expressed—and sincerely too—such feelings towards his daughter, should in the very hour of his uttering them, expect her to consummate the act, which eternally and irrevocably ensured her misery—It seemed almost as if she were compromising her dignity, and confirming her own hypocrisy, in accepting the trinkets; and she was on the point of seizing that last opportunity of throwing herself at her father's feet, and confessing the whole truth; when the habitual fear which was predominant in all her serious intercourse with the Marquess triumphed—she accepted the pearls, and promised to be punctual to the time appointed for the movement of the procession to church.

From this period to that, at which she left the house of her father, Lady Hester moved and acted as if she were in a trance: her forehead burned, her hands were icy cold, an aching pain seemed fixed in her heart, and all she did, she did mechanically and almost unconsciously. She was told that all was ready—her father came to



lead her down stairs—the crowd had gathered in the street—the carriages were drawn up to the door. Eleven equipages in line at that period of the year created a very considerable sensation; and as the Marquess stepped into Lord Elmsdale's town chariot, he felt greatly pleased at perceiving amongst the assembled throng, many of his own tradesmen and their families, gaily dressed, looking anxiously at the proceedings, and joining in the murmur of approbation which gave evidence of their opinion of the beauty and elegance of the wretched heroine of the day.

They reached the church, and entered it by the Maddox-street door, and the assembled party were placed in their proper positions within the sacred building; but there appeared no clergyman to perform the ceremony. The Marquess had announced that the Bishop of Dorchester would officiate, but his lordship had not arrived: a message was despatched to his town-house; the servants there, had heard nothing of his lordship. Something it was necessary to do to obviate the consequence of this painful and unlooked-for



disappointment; and, after three quarters of an hour, a young gentleman, who had just taken orders, (and who was luckily caught by the clerk,) proceeded to make his *début* in the clerical character, by performing the ceremony.

The said poor young gentleman began, under the tuition of the said clerk, after having started by reading the beginning of the ceremony for "the baptism of those of riper years," (a mistake, which tended very much to divest the solemnity of its solemn character, and to cause sundry smiles to play over the countenances of all the company, except those of the Marquess and his daughter,) commenced the office of matrimony. As for his Lordship, the failure of the Bishop was too serious a calamity, as far as effect went, for him to recover from, very soon; and this defection was made more painful, by the striking contrast to the dignity of the prelate, which the inexperience of the curate so ludicrously exhibited. However, the ceremony went on in earnest. Lady Hester trembled like a leaf—her sobs interrupted the diffident minister, and excited the most serious



apprehensions on the part of Miss Everingham, who was near her. She bore up, however, against the torrent of feeling which nearly overwhelmed her, until the question was put to her, "whether she would have that man to be her wedded husband?"

It seemed as if the reply would have choked her—she struggled to pronounce it—the convulsive effort failed her—and, uttering a piercing shriek, which made the vaulted roof reverberate, she sank, apparently dead, on the floor of the church.

The consternation caused by this extraordinary event may be more easily imagined than described; the young clergyman, who, as we know, had never before officiated upon a similar occasion, seemed doubtful whether, in good society, such a scene was considered an essential part of the exhibition. Those who had themselves submitted to the operation, knew better; and in an instant the senseless girl was lifted from the earth and borne to the vestry-room, where the usual restoratives were administered, but without



producing the desired effect. What was to be done? they were in the midst of medical advice, assistance was called in, but all hope of her being competent to conclude the ceremony at that time, was very speedily abandoned. At one moment she had so far recovered as to be conscious where she was; but, to the horror of the whole party, and of the awkwardly situated bridegroom in particular, the moment he approached to offer a little of his harmless consolation, she repeated the shriek she had before given, and hiding her face with her hands, relapsed into utter insensibility.

The Marquess was now "fooled to the top of his bent." The extent of his agony and vexation, first at the unexpected frustration of all his hopes—at the serious effect produced upon his child—at the painful dilemma in which Lord Elmsdale was placed—but most of all at the absurd appearance the whole affair would have with the town, is as indescribable as it was incalculable.

The earliest alarm of the catastrophe was given to the mob, by the hurried rush out of the



beadle to fetch a physician. The cause was soon known; and this practical announcement of the failure in the first instance of completing the union of the parties, was very shortly after confirmed with the additional certainty that they would not be married that day, by the sudden exit of the young curate from the vestry-room door, who seeing no probability of ultimate success in the then present proceedings, set off as hard as he could to fulfil an engagement which he had entered into, to make his first appearance that day in the funeral line, by burying a baby at Bayswater at half after one.

Lady Hester did not rally sufficiently to be removed for nearly an hour. She was then placed in the carriage between Miss Everingham and the Duchess of St. Leonard's, and conveyed slowly to Grosvenor-square. All the visitors present at the intended marriage, except the Oldhams and Cornet Richardson, betaking themselves to their respective homes, to the right and to the left: Lord Snowdon and his



intended son-in-law proceeding in his carriage to the home of his beloved.

In the drawing-room were assembled those who had been invited to the *déjeuner*, and not to the wedding. Happy, hungry souls, they had been waiting an hour longer than they had calculated upon, and were prepared to congratulate and feast in the most unsparing manner. This, Lord Snowdon did not so much care for: there they were, and they might go or stay, exactly as they chose; but he *did* turn nearly sick, when he saw the new and elegant travelling carriage, which was to have been drawn by "four beautiful horses belonging to the celebrated stud of Lord Elmsdale," standing at the door of his mansion with four posters,—sent by mistake from the stables by Lord Elmsdale's servants,—and a crowd of people admiring and wondering at the beauty and neatness of the vehicle, destined, as his Lordship knew, to be drawn back to the coach-house empty and unoccupied.

Poor Lady Hester was conveyed to her room,



and eventually placed in bed, when it was pronounced, not only by the physician whom the beadle had selected, but by Sir Henry himself, who had been immediately afterwards sent for, that the case was one of extreme delicacy; both joining in a conviction of the absolute necessity of perfect quietude. Miss Everingham, whose affection for her friend was now proved by the earnestness of her assiduities and the entirety of her devotion, took charge of her, and received the warmest acknowledgments from the Marquess, whose state of mind did not permit him to decide upon the course he should ultimately pursue, but who was satisfied on one point, that his ill-fated daughter was not married as he had intended her to be,—a failure in his design, rendered the more uncomfortable by the recollection of the little *historiettes* of the proceedings which he had so anxiously furnished for the daily newspapers, not one of which he could either recover or explain away, without betraying himself to the gentlemen of the press, in having volunteered his



labours as an amateur court newsman; every circumstance detailed in his authentic communications, having been so totally unlike the events which had actually occurred, that if his account should be inserted, public attention would, of course, be specially directed to the *real* facts, by the absolute necessity which the veracious editors would be under, of contradicting what turned out, by a succession of mishaps, to be neither more nor less than a tissue of falsehoods.

Most of the party took leave the moment the extremely disagreeable disappointment was explained to them. The Marquess was glad to be rid of them, as of course was Lord Elmsdale, who remained behind to be managed and soothed by his noble father-in-law; yet, in the heart of the illustrious master of the mansion, there rankled some regrets, that all the magnificent preparations for the banquet had been made in vain, and that the splendid gold service, "used on the occasion of the royal visit to Lionsden," had not been seen; nor was his serenity of mind



much better secured, when, on pushing open the door of the dinner-room where the *déjeuner* was laid, in order to cast one lingering longing look at the taste and elegance of its arrangement, he beheld, although every other individual except Lord Elmsdale, who was up stairs, had departed, Lady Katharine and Miss Elizabeth Oldham, exhibiting countenances expressive of neither pain nor sorrow, seated at the upper end of the table, demolishing, with the most healthful appetites, the delicacies spread before them in which pursuit they were zealously assisted by Mr. Frederick Richardson, and a Mr. Losh, a friend of his, whom he had "taken the liberty" of bringing with him to the wedding banquet.

The Marquess looked in, saw the group, and hastily closing the door, proceeded to the library, in order to have, what he had no doubt must be a very important conversation with the disappointed Lord Elmsdale.



## CHAPTER IX.

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WE must now recur to France—The letter of poor Lady Hester, which she had intended to soothe the feelings of her brother, and heal the wounds which she perhaps might be conscious she had inflicted on the heart of his companion, did, as it unfortunately turned out, produce a perfectly contrary effect. In all that she had said to Lord Malvern, she had satisfied him that she went with sorrow and reluctance to the altar; and what she had said with respect to his companion, convinced him that *he* was the object upon whom her affections were fixed.

In health, Lord Malvern was by no means strong or well. The shock he had received from the suddenness of the intelligence of his father's



marriage, had seriously affected him ; and the enlightenment which he had obtained from Lady Hester as to the alteration in Miss Oldham's manner, and even character, however much it might reconcile him mentally to the circumstance, did not succeed in removing the bodily ills which the surprise had in the first instance produced.

In the state of listless indolence to which Lord Malvern had been so suddenly reduced, it grieved Burford very much to see that the apprehensions of his talented mother, with respect to the possibility of his being caught by her daughter, were not so entirely groundless as he had at first imagined them to be. Of course he could make no remark to his sister, no observation to his parent ; but it was impossible not to notice that Lord Malvern felt happier and more at ease when Miss Burford was present. She sang to him, as she had done earlier in life ; but her sweet voice was sweeter now than then, and her improvement in the art had neither brought with it forwardness nor affectation : she sang *from* the



heart, to the heart, and seemed to feel the force of the words which she uttered so melodiously, and to which the expression of a charming, intelligent, and intellectual countenance, gave additional strength and power.

It was not, however, the mere superficiality of every day accomplishments that rivetted Lord Malvern's attention to this amiable girl. The soft gentleness of her manner, the quality of her mind, and the graceful readiness and simplicity with she conducted herself as a daughter towards her exemplary and revered parent, were to him new and beautiful to see. He had lost his own mother before he was of an age to know her, or appreciate her tenderness; he and his sister had been brought up unconscious of the best and kindest feelings of our nature. The young Lord had proceeded through the different forms of a public school, and then through the routine of the University: he had visited his paternal homes at stated seasons, and enjoyed the society of his sister, but not in the calm and quiet sense of the word enjoyment: large



parties, large rooms, large establishments, noble banquets, glittering parties, and vast assemblies, were the attributes of Lionsden and Grosvenor-square. He had never known the sweet attraction of maternal affection, and never had received the unquestionable advantages of a mother's care and solicitude. Of that sort of calm and unostentatious comfort which springs from filial duty and maternal love, he had no notion.—To be at home, with *him*, was to be mixing in one continued round of gaiety and dissipation. Succeeding to this, came his protracted tour, agreeable in an eminent degree, but characterized by a restless activity and constant change. To *him* then, we say, the intellectual character of his intercourse with the happy family in which he had thought proper to domesticate himself, was, upon every account, winning and attractive.

In the intervals of Maria's singing, Burford read to them, and then the gentle Maria worked, as did her mother. What they did in that way Lord Malvern never could exactly ascertain. The same long strips, hemmed and cut, and shut



up in boxes at the end of the evening, seemed always to be the objects of their care; but it was employment, and had but one drawback in his Lordship's opinion,—it kept the soft blue eyes of the gentle girl fixed downwards. Upon what his Lordship's eyes were generally rivetted, Mrs. Burford, who occasionally lifted hers (cased too in glasses,) from her muslin strips, and her son, who now and then glanced from his book, very soon ascertained. However, the nearly approaching execution of the old lady's plan, satisfied her that it "made no great difference for a day or two;" and so the poor young Lord lay becalmed, as it were, in this little haven of peace and affection; and charmed as he was with its sweet serenity, felt that he had never been at home before.

Nothing is more dangerous to the heart than this sort of quiet enjoyment:—the constant association with a lovely girl, whose conduct in her own circle gives earnest of her excellence in a more extended sphere, renders her, to a man of genuine feeling, an object of intense interest.



The unaffected kindness and unrestrained attention which Lord Malvern experienced from Maria Burford, during the period when he was really suffering from the illness produced by the sudden shock which he had received, excited his gratitude, and commanded his esteem. Situated as he was, these were ominous symptoms of a much more serious complaint; and although, as we have already seen, neither Mrs. Burford nor her son could say a word to Maria upon the subject, which might, if they had done so, be construed by her into a reproach for forwardness, or a suspicion that she was endeavouring to gain an influence over their self-invited guest, the circumstances only confirmed the watchful parent in the expediency of the plan she had organized, but which, so long as she felt herself mistaken in her anticipation of results, she did not mean to put into execution.

The change in Lord Malvern's manner kept pace with the improvement of his health. He was no longer restless and feverish, he was calm and gentle, and sought no relaxation or amuse-



ment beyond the threshold of the house. To be read to by Burford, sung to by his sister, talked to by his mother, and attended to by all three of them, seemed to him the height of human enjoyment; and when he could be prevailed upon to take an airing, it was invariably in a carriage sufficiently capacious to carry "four insides." In short, ten or twelve days' residence had so completely domesticated him, that the old lady felt convinced the time had already arrived when it was her duty to announce the departure of herself and daughter.

It is impossible not to appreciate the delicacy and tenderness of this exemplary parent. In *her* way, she was as proud as Lord Snowdon; and would rather have seen her daughter a beggar, than the despised and neglected adjunct of the aristocracy, her connexion with which, the world, and one who was greater than all the rest of the world put together, the Marquess himself, would not fail to attribute to her cunning and adroitness.

It was resolved that Burford should announce



to Lord Malvern the arrival of the summons of his mother to England. And as it had been deemed expedient to keep Maria entirely in the dark as to the reality of the invitation, the announcement was to be made to *her* at the same time, in order that the surprise which she would naturally exhibit, might obviate any suspicion in his Lordship's mind that the proposed journey was a stroke of policy, or a matter of family arrangement.

To some mothers it may appear that Mrs. Burford acted indiscreetly, if not ungenerously, and cruelly, if not incautiously, in permitting the intimacy between the young Lord and her daughter to continue even so long as it did; and those of the Snowdon faction will, no doubt, discover that no surer mode of catching a heart can be pursued, than permitting a social intercourse between two people of congenial habits, assimilating tastes, and sympathising feelings, up to a certain point, and then suddenly terminating it;—they will, however, do Mrs. Burford a great injustice. It is true she anticipated the



possibility of such an effect being produced as she had mentioned to her son, and the result too soon convinced her of the correctness of her supposition ; but, as a matter of common civility, having permitted the domestication of Lord Malvern, she could not sooner have framed an excuse for quitting him, more particularly after the expression of his happiness at possessing such a home, and such resources, at a moment when his heart and mind were so torn and harassed.

On the morning of the intended communication of their departure, Lord Malvern received his sister's long and interesting letter. It came at a curious crisis. As the reader knows, it announced the almost incomprehensible change in Elizabeth Oldham's manners and feelings, and the certainty of her unqualified defection and heartlessness. The knowledge of this wonderful alteration in all the circumstances of his 'case' naturally threw the young nobleman's thoughts into an entirely new channel. His father could no longer be considered the tyrant



oppressing innocence, or the conspirator with Lady Katharine, in purchasing the happiness of Miss Oldham with his offer of rank and fortune. It appeared she was the willing and consenting acceptor of his proposal; a proposal which, it is hardly necessary to observe, was made without the slightest knowledge, on the Marquess's part, of any supposed prior attachment of the young lady to any body else, much less to his own son.

This enlightenment, while it very much moderated the asperity of his feelings towards his father, very considerably decreased his Lordship's regret and solicitude about his future mother-in-law. Amongst a thousand excellent women it is but fair to expect one Elizabeth Oldham; and although his sorrow now assumed the character of anger, and his late despair and commiseration of her fate, turned to something very like hatred and contempt, the new feeling that was generated was of infinitely more importance to the family circle in the *Allée des Veuves*, than any which the intelligence he had



just received had induced him to discard. He had been slighted—deceived—forgotten—jilted. To this he could not quietly submit; he instantly contrasted in his mind the flippant gaiety and superficial accomplishments of Elizabeth Oldham with the gentle manners and sterling qualities of Maria Burford.

Decidedly unequal marriages never answer. Both parties are placed in false positions; and a married life between such persons in general consists of a constant struggle between the jarring inclinations, and not unfrequently the clashing connexions of either party. It is true that we have seen most amiable persons raised to high rank and station by marriage, who have done honour to that rank and station; but the experiment is a hazardous one, and one which Lord Malvern, young as he was, was wise enough not to think of trying; but—for it seems his views and considerations had, in eight short days, taken that turn—the difference in station between Miss Elizabeth Oldham and Miss Maria Burford was very trifling indeed. The grandmother of Miss



Burford had been the daughter of a Baron, whose daughter had married a clergyman; the mother of Miss Oldham was the daughter of an Earl who had married a merchant in the city: so that taking an average (as that respectable gentleman himself, now no more, would have said,) of the pretensions of both, it seemed as if the division of honours would turn out to be pretty equal. This comparison, however, was not judiciously made by Lord Malvern; it was not between Miss Burford and Miss Oldham it should have been instituted, but between Miss Burford and the young lady of exalted rank and unbounded wealth, whom Lord Snowdon had decided upon as Lord Malvern's future wife. Lord Snowdon might marry Miss Oldham, because his race was nearly run; but his son had to increase the fame and fortune of the family, and, therefore, he must make a more noble and wealthy alliance.

Upon this calculation, erroneous as it was, throwing into the scale the intimate friendship which existed between Lord Malvern and Bur-



ford, and making a comparison between the exemplary and agreeable mother of the young lady, and the old painted cockatoo, whose incessant gabble was calculated to drive any man mad in a week; and, above all, adding to these the fact that he had been slighted and forgotten by the one, and assiduously and kindly attended to by the other, it is not surprising that the complaint with which Mr. Burford began to suspect Lord Malvern had really begun to be attacked, should receive a very violent accession during the following day.

It was not, however, to Lord Malvern alone that Lady Hester's letter was so deeply interesting. That part which referred to Burford convinced the young Lord that his suspicions were correct, and that to Burford's modesty and delicacy alone were attributable his opinion—at least his declared opinion—of Lady Hester's sentiments as regarded him. There was in the caution with which she touched the subject, ample proof of its importance to her. She trod lightly and loitered not on the ground which



she knew to be undermined ; and in the studious avoidance of any thing which might be considered particular in the way of remembrance, her brother beheld the ratification of all his suspicions of the real nature and character of her *friendship* for his companion.

“ Well, Charles,” said his Lordship, after he had read Lady Hester’s letter, “ what think you now ?—all women are not faultless. I suppose it was *my* vanity, but I certainly thought Elizabeth Oldham, at one time, devoted to me ; and it was that feeling which first drew my attention most particularly to her. Vanity took the place of judgment ; I was flattered by what I fancied her preference, and mistook the gratitude of a dupe for the devotion of a lover. Now, that my eyes are opened, shall I grieve, shall I pine and wear the willow ? no, Charles, for *me* there are yet hopes of happiness. Ah !” added he thoughtfully, “ but for my poor sister all is misery. I will not ask you for an opinion upon that passage of her letter where she speaks of *you*, but content myself with reproaching you for not re-



posing a confidence in me, upon a subject so nearly connected with the happiness of the two beings to whom I am most attached on earth; or if there be a third, Charles"——

"My dear Malvern," interrupted Burford, who was alarmed at the earnestness of Lord Malvern's manner, and trembled lest the already complicated affairs of the Plinlimmons should get another twist by an untoward confession, "spare me—I am content, and bow to my fate; duty and reason bade me stifle a feeling which I ought never to have permitted to exist. All that man could do I did—I withdrew from your society while you were constantly at home, and withdrew *you* from home before I ventured to enjoy it."

"But why so?" said Lord Malvern.

"I saw ruin and destruction to all of us, in my continuance at Lionsden," replied Burford.

"I was aware of my father's views for Hester," said Lord Malvern, "but you see by her letter how perfectly justified I am in my suspicions of what would be the result of his efforts



to realize them. Would I not—or ought he not—rather to have rejoiced in the union of his child with a man worthy of her—a man”——

“My dear Malvern,” interrupted Burford, “*I* cannot, from my station in life, and *you* cannot, from the ingenuousness of your character and inexperience in the world, properly appreciate the feelings which actuate a man of your father’s principles and pretensions. All I have to implore of you is never to recur to the subject: all is now over—your sister in a few days will be the wife of an amiable and honourable man, of suitable rank and fortune; and nothing is left for *me* but to pray for her happiness, in a sphere of life to which nothing but madness could ever have lifted my thoughts or feelings as connected with her.”

“Perhaps,” said Lord Malvern, “I shall, at no very great distance of time, convince you that the approximation of our spheres is not a matter of so much doubt or difficulty as you may imagine. There is”——

“My dear Malvern,” said Burford, who truly



enough anticipated the turn which the conversation was about to take, and was resolutely determined to check it in the outset, "the carriage has been at the door nearly an hour."

"Has it?" said Lord Malvern, smiling with a sort of consciousness of having made up his mind to some measure which he felt sure would surprise his friend and companion;—"when will your mother and sister be ready?"

"I think they are not going out to-day," said Burford.

"See," said Lord Malvern, "because if they are not inclined for a drive, I am for home: we can enjoy our own society here, as well as in the Bois de Boulogne."

"But the air and exercise," said Burford; "recollect the doctor."

"I need no doctors now, Charles," answered Lord Malvern; "my cure has been effected by my sister's letter: there is, I assure you, infinitely greater danger in a new complaint than a relapse. Go see about the ladies: I shall not go if they do not; so either they drive, or we remain *chez*



*nous*. I have promised Maria to give her her *revanche* at Chess; and if we do not make an excursion, we will play our game before dinner, and so have more time for music in the evening."

"Still harping upon my daughter," says Polonius. Burford felt very much like the old chamberlain with regard to his sister; and began to calculate—since this was to be the last day of their social intercourse—which was the more prudent measure—Chess at home, or the drive abroad. He decided for the latter. There is a sort of intimate connexion between the hostile parties at Chess, when they happen to be of different sexes, which sometimes converts their scientific opposition into an artless agreement: the player becomes the only queen the lover wishes to check-mate, and when he ends his game finds his own heart the last pawn.

As the whole of this final day was one of fever and worry, Mrs. Burford, who had established a complete understanding with her son as to the mode of managing matters so as to avoid



a crisis, took the hint which he gave her to rescind the resolution she had, under his advice, formed of not going out, and hastened to prepare herself and her child for the drive.

It was the first time they had felt dull or embarrassed. Maria's natural gentleness and sweetness of manner were chilled and constrained by an evident restlessness on the part of her mother, arising not only from the consciousness of what was to occur in the way of announcement of their departure, but from what her son had told her of the evident turn of Lord Malvern's mind, and the peculiarity of his conduct, after he had heard the true history of Miss Oldham's defection. Burford's spirits were naturally much depressed, for the wedding-day of her whom alone he loved on earth was speedily indeed to arrive; and the conversation which had passed between him and his friend, although, in point of fact, it could neither recal what was past, nor undo what was done, and could not satisfy even himself of the probability of his ever having brought his suit to a successful issue, cer-



tainly implied a possibility that such a result might have been attained if he had exerted his energies a little more, or adopted a line of conduct more characterised by that, without which it is proverbially said, "fair lady never was won."

No reflection could be much more galling—the idea that if he had done *this*, or if he had said *that*, things might have all gone differently and perhaps prosperously. And yet what *could* have happened? nothing to soothe the Marquess, and every thing to involve both his children in domestic warfare against him. This ought to have calmed and tranquillized him; and so in all probability on any other day it would, but on this particular day, when he had ascertained the very hour in which Lady Hester was to become the wife of another, it required more than his ordinary philosophy to check the natural current of his thoughts.

Lord Malvern was infected with the general gloom. He spoke more of his own sister than pleased Burford, and looked more at Burford's



sister than pleased her mother. She could not avoid noticing the marked tenderness of his manner towards her child, nor could she disguise from herself the pleasure which Maria seemed to feel in his society. Still, however, a few hours would terminate the affair, and she should have the satisfaction of knowing that she had done her duty.

The drive concluded and the party returned, not much time elapsed before dinner—the dinner after which the scheme of emigration was to be broached. The heretofore social meal passed in a sort of fitful silence, and had been concluded for more than half an hour before the matron felt herself adequate to the announcement of her design.

At length she mustered up courage to begin.

“I am going,” said Mrs. Burford, “I think to surprise you, Lord Malvern—I am sure I shall surprise my daughter—my son is aware of my proceedings—Maria and I are going to London immediately.”



“ Me !” exclaimed Maria.

“ Maria !” exclaimed Lord Malvern ; “ to London ! for What ?”

“ I have received a letter,” said Mrs. Burford, “ which requires my presence there at the beginning of next week ; it is law business, and must be attended to, and ~~my~~ my presence and that of my daughter are indispensable.”

“ Impossible ! my dear Mrs. Burford,” said Lord Malvern, “ you are telling us this to make us implore and entreat you to stay ; in short, teaching us properly to appreciate your society, by threatening to rob us of it.”

“ Indeed, no,” said Mrs. Burford ; “ nothing can be more disagreeable than the journey and all its concomitants, but I have a duty to perform, and I must do it.”

“ When did you get this letter ?” said Miss Burford, in a tone which was satisfactory only to Lord Malvern, who playfully took up the question in a similar tone, and repeated it verbatim.

“ This morning, Maria,” said the matron ;



"it concerns you very nearly, and therefore I thought I would not tell you of it before it was necessary."

"Me!" said Miss Burford, wonderingly.

"I think you are joking," said Lord Malvern.

"No," said Burford, "my mother is in earnest; she has consulted me upon the possibility of her avoiding the journey, but I see no alternative."

"When do you propose to return?" said his lordship.

"That," replied the lady, "is very uncertain indeed. I should say in all probability, never."

"Then," said Lord Malvern, with an unusually thoughtful expression in his countenance, "I am the cause of your going. I have intruded myself—I have deranged your establishment—I am a burden to you, and have driven you from your charming retirement."

"No, indeed," said Mrs. Burford; "nothing has ever given me more pleasure than receiving your Lordship here, and most happy should I have been to continue your hostess; but



I think, Charles has too frequently inculcated upon your mind the importance of fulfilling our duties, to render it necessary for me to say more than that duty calls me away, and I cannot resist the appeal."

"And," said Lord Malvern, "is Maria so deeply interested in the affair, and yet ignorant of the measure till now?"

"Till now," said Maria, with a smile not quite unqualified by regret and surprise, "I am as ignorant of the meaning of it now as ever."

"I am sure," said Mrs. Burford, "you may rely implicitly on my judgment in the affair."

"It is not," said Lord Malvern, "to force her into a marriage against her inclinations? if it is, Maria, resist—that is my doctrine, dutiful or undutiful. This week is to be marked in the kalends of my life, and in the annals of my family, as one in which an amiable, kind-hearted girl is sacrificed. I trust it is not to be distinguished in my recollection, by the horrors of a double sacrifice."



"I assure you, Lord Malvern," said Mrs. Burford, smiling, "I have not the slightest intention of exerting my authority in that way."

Now of all turns that the conversation could possibly have taken, this was the one of all others most desirable to be avoided. Burford felt his ears tingle; his mother exchanged looks with him, expressive of the misdirection of the debate; and Maria, scarcely knowing why, blushed deeply.

"Well, now then," said his Lordship, "tell me, why *do* you go? and Burford, why did you not tell me this before, to-day?"

"Why," said Burford, "I honestly confess the subject was a painful one, and I thought it best to let my mother open it herself."

"Are you pleased," said Lord Malvern to Maria, "with the idea of going off to England, and so suddenly?"

Here was a question—what would she say?

"I am not accustomed," said Miss Burford, "to such sudden determinations; I confess it has taken me a good deal by surprise."



“When do you purpose starting?” said Lord Malvern.

“Either to-morrow or the next day at farthest,” said Mrs. Burford.

“Oh, not to-morrow!” said Lord Malvern; “one day’s reprieve.”

“We cannot well go to-morrow, Mamma,” said Maria, chiming in discordantly, to her mother’s ears, with his Lordship.

“We shall see, dear,” answered Mrs. Burford.

“How do you travel? Where do you mean to sleep on the road? What servants do you take?” said Lord Malvern.

“Why, my Lord,” said Mrs. Burford, “we travel very humbly. I think the Diligence will have the ‘honour’ of conveying us to Calais.”

“No, no,” said Lord Malvern; “if you *are* really obliged to go, and seriously mean to go, you go with me. I have no tie to Paris when your establishment is broken up. Charles and I can sit ourselves down wherever we please. I fixed myself here because I found myself happy; as for the place itself, I detest it—at least I do *now*.”



I shall be just as comfortable travelling as staying still; and therefore we will make a 'tour' as far as the coast—cross I shall not. But as it turns out, it will be exceedingly convenient for the arrangement of my father's business; for, as Charles knows, his lawyer *must* see me before the settlements for his new marriage can be completed, and I had mentioned Paris as the place of rendezvous. Calais will be of course infinitely more agreeable to the man of business—a mere ten hours affair from London—and there I can do all that is necessary; and if you like to take Charles on to town with you, I can wait and pass my time very agreeably either at Calais or Boulogne till his return."

This was an unexpected *coup*. The only person of the party whose eyes brightened at the proposition was Maria's; who, as the affair was to be undertaken, why, she could not yet guess, was well enough pleased at converting a tedious journey in a heavy day-and-night-going-diligence, into an agreeable excursion in agreeable society.



Burford said nothing, because he could not see any very tenable objection to the scheme.

—Mrs. Burford, like her son, was at fault.

“If you don’t agree to this proposition, Mrs. Burford,” continued Lord Malvern, “it will perfectly convince me that I am right in my suspicions, and that you are actually flying from your home to escape my worrying and boring society. If that be really the case, tell me so, and I will spare you all the trouble and inconvenience of moving. It would cost me a double pang—first, to think that I had already annoyed you so long, and secondly, to think I should have made myself so odious.”

“Oh! Lord Malvern,” said Maria, in the naturalness of her heart, and really believing that her mother was behaving very rudely, “how can you think *that*?”

Mrs. Burford’s blood tingled; another demonstration—how could it be helped? well—what was to be done?

“I think,” said Burford, “our tour ought to be pursued in another direction”——



“ My dear fellow,” said Lord Malvern, “ you know as well as I, that it cannot be pursued in *any* direction, till I hear from Lord Snowdon’s man of business. Common sense, common reason tell you, that I shall save him and my father a vast deal of trouble and expense, by meeting him more than half way. And if we are to travel for health and recreation, surely we may mingle worldly convenience in our pursuits; and although the road from Paris to Calais presents no great novelty, we shall ourselves make the novelty of converting a double journey of necessity, into a double journey of enjoyment and economy. Was there ever such a union of advantages produced? It is so seldom that reason and pleasure post the same road, that I hail the combination with delight.”

“ My dear Lord,” said Mrs. Burford, “ I must entreat you to banish from your mind any idea of your having *généé* or inconvenienced us. I think, perhaps we shall worry and inconvenience you by adopting your plan.”

“ How?” interrupted Lord Malvern, “ not



in the least—it cannot; on the contrary—so now not another word, I will hear no more—the arrangement rests with me—on the morning after to-morrow, my carriage shall be here at the door ready for packing.”

“Indeed! I——” said Mrs. Burford.

“—— No neither deed nor word,” said Lord Malvern; “I only appeal to Maria, whether my proposal is not perfectly rational, and unless you have decided that I am unbearable for three or four days longer, the most advantageous to all parties?”

“Maria is no judge of the importance of the business which calls us away,” said Mrs. Burford, who, caught in her own trap, was now forced to England, whither in point of fact she did not mean to go; her only object being to break up the party, and perhaps establish herself at Abbeville or at one of the sea-ports.

“I confess, I see no objection to Lord Malvern’s proposal,” said Burford, to his mother’s infinite astonishment; an astonishment which, however, afterwards, when they were alone, he



explained away. The fact was, that he saw the impossibility of further contesting the question without actually affronting his friend; and, if that were not the alternative, the choice of evils was confined to making the question one of importance, which it naturally was not, and which it must have derived from some circumstance connected with it, into a discussion of which, it was of course impossible to enter. It was therefore, Burford's policy to accede to the proposition, as being unquestionably the safest, best, and most expeditious mode of carrying his mother's judicious scheme into effect. The circumstance of the journey ensured them from the dangerous consequences of a chance *tête-à-tête* between Maria and the dreaded lover, while the varying scenery and subjects which would come under their observation during the journey, would furnish plenty of materials for conversation, and the hurry and bustle of the whole expedition would divert the mind of the young lord from the object upon which even Burford himself began seriously to apprehend it had fixed itself.



Mrs. Burford did not stop to argue with her son, nor could she enlarge upon the subject, or question his motives for so readily agreeing to the excursion; it was sufficient for her to know that he had his reasons, which were probably founded upon a more intimate knowledge than she could be supposed to possess, of the character and disposition of his friend and pupil.

"I find," said she, "that I am left in a glorious minority of one upon this question, and therefore, I shall not trouble the house with any farther division."

"That's right, my dear Lady," said Lord Malvern. "I feel myself now in authority,—I am the leader of a party; and that is what my illustrious father, with all his anxiety to be so, never yet has been. You are all pledged to me: I have the regulation of every thing; and even if in some things I may appear to err in judgment, it is one of the established principles of partizanship, that the followers should sacrifice their own opinions upon minor points, even if they do not at the instant see their object or bearing, believing



them in the implicitness of their confidence in their leader, to be, if *he* thinks so, the wisest and most favourable as conducive to the ulterior objects in view."

"I am sure," said Mrs. Burford, "with what *you* suggest, and Charles agrees in, I ought to be satisfied."

"What Cato did, and Addison approved,  
Cannot be wrong!"

exclaimed Lord Malvern; "so said Eustace Budgell, when according to his biographers, he committed a double murder; for they write in his life, or rather of his death, that having taken a wherry at Somerset House, he ordered the waterman to *shoot* London Bridge, and while the man was obeying his orders, he jumped into the river and *drowned* himself."

"Poor Budgell," said Burford, "like many other wiser and better men he is not answerable for the absurdities of his biographers; however, as far as my vote goes in the present question, Lord Malvern has it."

"Has it," said Lord Malvern, "to be sure he



has ; and henceforth be mine all the charge and care of every thing connected with the expedition. Excepting to afford us her countenance, Mrs. Burford shall have no share in the proceedings ; and as for Maria and her brother, their duty shall be thus divided, wherever we dine ; he shall say a grace, and she shall look on ; for be it known I travel slowly. I shall be anxious to hear about Hester's marriage, and whither they are gone ; for Charles," said his Lordship, "by the time we reach Calais, they will have departed from London to spend the honeymoon."

The tone in which this was spoken, the manner in which it was addressed to Burford, and the expression of the young lord's countenance, startled Mrs. Burford, and brought the blood into her son's cheeks. The old lady had heard Charles speak in terms of the highest admiration of Lady Hester, but admiration unmixed with any more tender feeling ; and it struck her as peculiarly odd, that Lord Malvern, in referring to her marriage, should seem to associate Burford with his sister in a recollection of what was so



soon to occur, which ought not, and could not, as she naturally supposed, affect him in any way, but as an event happening in his patron's family at which he ought to rejoice.

"As to the happiness of the new married couple," said Lord Malvern. "I don't intend to discuss it, for I hate to express a hope which I despair of seeing realized; and as for *you*, I am sure I won't ask *you* to give an opinion on the subject."

"Lord Malvern," said Burford, really overcome by the attack so little expected, and which seemed to have originated in the *abandon* which Lord Malvern had given to his spirits, at being appointed captain of the caravan to Calais, "whatever may conduce to Lady Hester's happiness or —"

"There, there," said his Lordship, "do not preach, Charles,—it is all hypocrisy. My dear Mrs. Burford," continued he, "this son of yours is a most extraordinary person; all I wish is, that he had been a little more candid, and a little less diffident, and I——"



“—— My dear Malvern,” said Burford, “pray consider.”

“Consider ! I do,” said his Lordship, “and the more I consider the more I regret. However, as that is past praying for, so is it past preaching about; and let us occupy—or rather let me—for you,—no none of ye, are to interfere—my thoughts in arranging my plan;—when must you be in London, Mrs. Burford?”

This was an unlucky question, for as she had no business whatever in that city, it was difficult at the moment to settle upon what day it was absolutely necessary she should do nothing: she looked at her son—for having once conceded to his views upon the subject of the expedition, she thought it best to leave the settlement of the time which it was to occupy equally to his judgment.

“Why,” said Burford, as much puzzled as his respectable parent, “I should think—about—”

“Well, well,” said Lord Malvern, “I want no secrets; any time in the course of next week will do, I suppose. As for Maria and I, we seem to



be entirely excluded from the sanhedrin ; however, we know our duty, and will do it."

There was something so entirely new in Lord Malvern's manner—a gaiety almost amounting to wildness, mixed with an occasional tenderness, when Maria spoke, or when she was named, and an ease and readiness in the way in which he spoke to her and of her as "Maria," which particularly struck Burford and his mother. Yet what could they do? He asked "Maria" to sing—could they hinder her? He challenged her to her *revanche* at Chess, as he had promised—could they prevent her accepting it? And now that they had done all they could to break off the intimacy, could they, with any thing like decency or feeling, refuse to agree in the plan he had proposed for maintaining it for three or four days longer? These were the perplexities in which they were involved ; and, as has already been observed, it would have been distressing and indelicate, in the highest degree, to have done—what perhaps a mother with a baser mind might have been induced to do—put Maria upon



her guard against encouraging a passion which might be hopeless, because the very caution presupposed a disposition which probably did not exist, and which the poor young lady could only have fancied had evinced itself by her manner towards their guest.

Another of those lumps of sugar in the shape of happy quiet evenings, in such a circle, had melted, and Lord Malvern retired, if not to bed, at least to his room, to concert with his valet—a most active and intelligent servant—all the measures necessary for the agreeable undertaking which he was now fully empowered to organise and direct. Maria remained with her mother and brother, and, to her surprise, though clearly to her conviction, placed a restraint upon their conversation, such as she had never been conscious of before. Her mother gazed on her with a peculiar sort of solicitude ; and Burford, conscious what had attracted this particular attention, was on the point of breaking the silence which affection and propriety had hitherto imposed. The same cause operated upon both



mother and son, for they had both seen, in their lynx-like watchfulness, a look of Lord Malvern's, during the game of Chess, which convinced them that the unconscious girl was an object of the tenderest interest to him. What cruelty would it have been to enlighten her upon this point, and how imperiously their duty commanded them to separate them. It was the discussion of this point, and the consideration of the wisdom and prudence of the line they had now actually adopted, upon which they wished to enter; but while the dear object of their anxiety was present, it was impossible to debate the question in which she was so vitally concerned.

When the opportunity at length arrived, and Maria retired to rest, Mrs. Burford and her son agreed that no other course could be pursued with a better chance of successful results than that which they had determined to adopt; and, accordingly, they agreed to direct their attention during the journey to three points. One, the acceleration of their movements; the second, the avoidance of any conversation which



could lead to the point most sedulously to be shunned; and the third, the prevention of any *tête-à-tête* between the principal parties implicated. With a careful eye to all these prudential precautions, the guardians of youthful happiness resolved that the journey might—as indeed now it must—be undertaken without any fear of consequences.

In the morning, Lord Malvern appeared an altered being: his eyes beamed brightly; his countenance looked cheerful; and he seemed to have forgotten all his own sorrows, in the effort to make his friends comfortable on the journey, from which—as, *in fact*, it was to lead to his separation from the object in which he was now so deeply interested—he appeared to anticipate some results not clearly definable to either of his “guardians,” and which, let it be what it might, thanks to their scrupulous attention to what was going on, were not in the least degree likely to occur.

The morning, however, brought a letter, which added a new reason for Burford’s making



the journey, not only to Calais, but further. It was a letter from some official authority in England, requiring him forthwith to take possession of the living of Silgrove, to which he had been preferred, and to make the necessary arrangements for occupying the parsonage attached to it, and performing sundry other duties, the fulfilment of which, it was quite clear, was essential not only to his perfect establishment in his right, but to the profit of the person who made the communication.

“Nothing can be more convenient,” said Lord Malvern; “the Fates for once conspire favourably. You must show your mother the parsonage. I know it well, and have, when a boy, passed many a happy hour under its roof. Charles is not a marrying man, I think,” added his Lordship, “and I should not be surprised to find you, Mrs. Burford, established there.”

“I am not quite so selfish, Lord Malvern,” said Mrs. Burford, “as to wish to usurp the place which may be destined for another.”



"No, but till that other is found?" said Lord Malvern.

"Which will be some time, depend upon it," rejoined Burford.

"I remember the parsonage at Silgrove," said Miss Burford; "I dined there once, several years ago, when I was staying at Lionsden with Lady Hester. I never saw a more desirable residence."

"You were, then, at Lionsden, Maria," said Lord Malvern; "which, now, for comfort, should you prefer—the palace or the parsonage?"

"To *my* mind, and with *my* means," said Maria, "I prefer the latter. I can feel and understand the happiness which may be rationally enjoyed in such a house, but my mind is not sufficiently exalted to appreciate all the delights of the other."

"Then Lionsden would have no charms for you?" said his Lordship. "Suppose my father, instead of fixing his attentions upon the gay and flippant Miss Oldham, had been attracted to the



milder radiance of the gentle, unaffected Maria Burford, what"—

"Ah, Lord Malvern," said Mrs. Burford, "how can you put such a case to the poor child?"

"It is foolish," replied his Lordship; "if she said 'yes,' I should regret it; if she said 'no,' I suppose I ought to be offended for my illustrious parent's sake. For *my* part, I think the union of the castle and the cottage might have been a very advantageous one."

Burford corrected the tone which Lord Malvern's conversation was assuming, by a look expressive of his promise not to revert to that subject again.

"Well, Mrs. Burford," said his Lordship, "I would advise you, when this young lady is married, to betake yourself to Silgrove: you will be near *us*—we shall be near you; and I cannot imagine a happier relief from all the glare of grandeur, the blaze of lights, and the turmoil of company, than a repetition of our calm and quiet evenings of the *Allée des Veuves*."



This speech was so curiously worded, implied so very much, and, probably, meant so very little, that Mrs. Burford thought it better to let it pass off without an observation. If she expressed any incredulity as to her daughter's marriage, it would lead to something, perhaps, serious in the way of protestation; if she declared that there was no prospect of such an event, it would look as if she sought for an opportunity to declare that her daughter was free and uninfluenced, and ready to receive the addresses of the man whose affections she was most anxious she should not gain.

It was a great relief to Mrs. Burford when she could escape from this conversation, and carry off her daughter, who hitherto wholly unaccustomed to constraint, and in the habit of being left to her own amusements and employments, could not conceive why she was now never permitted beyond the length of her mother's apron-string; and, to say truth, it was little less disagreeable than inexplicable: for, without a thought or wish beyond the simple



gratification which a well-educated, highly-gifted young woman naturally enjoys in the society of men like her brother and their guest, she felt that she should be much more happy and better amused if permitted to remain, as she had ever before been wont to do, to participate in the amusements of the morning, but which, for the last two or three days, she had been, as if accidentally, hindered from doing, and which, on this last day of their stay in Paris, was wholly put a stop to by the preparations for their departure on the following morning.

Lord Malvern was delighted that Burford was obliged to cross the Channel by his own business. He had begun to feel that he could not endure to think of Maria being set adrift in a steam-packet, with no other protector than her mother. It was impossible to calculate upon the sort of passengers who might go over with them; and men might be rude and uncivil to her, which would be terrible; or they might be extremely kind and civil to her, which he thought would be a great deal worse. Her brother would



be so proper a guardian—and so safe too; and then Burford would see his noble father, and could bring him news of his much-loved sister; and, in short, it really appeared as if the Fates were inclined to compensate him for all his past misfortunes, if, as he said, an escape from a flirt and a coquette, like Elizabeth Oldham, might be called a misfortune.

His Lordship occupied a considerable part of the morning in making arrangements and purchases in Paris, and returned, for the last time, to the house which his fancy had magnified into a palace—or rather a paradise. His evening, however, was destined to be less agreeable than usual, for poor Maria, who felt no ill, either bodily or mental, was forced to bed at nine o'clock, on the plea, not of having fatigued herself during that day, but because she would have a great deal of fatigue to undergo on the following one.

The reason for her retiring, if Mrs. Burford had known the whole programme of the expedition, was just as good, as regarded the present



day, as it was likely to be efficient with respect to the toils of the next; for Lord Malvern, who had despatched his courier *en avant* to secure beds and accommodations on the road, had declared himself incapable of a long journey, and divided the *trajet* so as to make their arrival at Calais the termination of the third day.

Whether Mrs. Burford or her son would have entered any very serious protest against this moderated rate of proceeding, had they been made aware of his Lordship's intention, it is impossible to say, but so it was. Nor were they permitted even to discuss the subject until after they had, for some hours, lost sight of the *Allée des Veuves*, and the golden dome of the *Invalids*, and were, to their infinite surprise, safely housed for the night at the *Ecu de France*, in the ancient town of Beauvais.



## CHAPTER X.

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AGREEABLE as the dilatoriness of the travellers may be, at least to one of the party, the reader must not linger upon the road; he must be hurried on in advance, in order to catch a glimpse of the appearance of affairs in Grosvenor-square on the day of the intended wedding.

The paternal solicitude of Lord Snowdon, was considerably relieved by the opinion of the physicians; but it must be confessed, that his parental anger was very much increased by the same cause. Both the doctors, eminent in their line, had pronounced the disorder mental. They could perceive no bodily ill, which was not of a temporary nature, and evidently resulting from an affection of the mind. To have seen his



daughter die would have wounded the Marquess's proud heart, but to believe, to be convinced that she had suffered her affections to be won without his consent, or that the struggle she had ineffectually made to obey his wishes and marry the man of his choice, was caused by a conflict in her bosom between love and duty, was more acutely cutting to his feelings.

It was not so much the loss of Lord Elmsdale, which he now looked upon as certain—although that was something—it was not the probable interference of the events of the day with his own approaching marriage—it was not the disclosure to himself of his daughter's concealment of some former attachment—no one of these was it that wrung him to the heart and stung him to the quick. No; as the surgeons tell us, the sense of bodily pain lies in the epidermis, so did the sensitiveness of Lord Snowdon inhabit the surface: the deep wound he felt not, it was when the skin was scratched that he winced; and neither the total change which the event might produce in his arrangements,



nor the agony his daughter suffered, nor the disappointment that her lover might endure, hurt him half so much as the certainty that the "town" would know all the particulars; that the newspapers, instead of proclaiming the *éclat* of the "wedding," would have to declare its lamentable discomfiture; that rumour, with her hundred tongues, would be busy in discovering causes, and ascribing reasons for the overthrow of his hopes and expectations; and that like those of the Lionsden *fête*, the proceedings of the day had turned out a failure of the most ridiculous and unusual, if not unprecedented character.

And then he recollected the accounts (by anticipation) which he had himself written for publication in the newspapers: if they appeared, they would only be inserted to provoke a general contradiction. No bishop graced the half-performed ceremony, which broke down in the hands of a tyro curate. No *déjeuner* was served on the gold plate; there was no bride to change her costume; no horses were brought from Lord Elmsdale's celebrated stud to draw the new





and elegant travelling chariot, which, instead of conveying the happy couple to spend the honeymoon, left the disunited lovers behind, and was dragged back to the stables whence it came.

Swift says, "pride or ambition often puts men upon doing the meanest things; so climbing is performed in the same posture as creeping." Lord Snowden, now that his scheme of self-puffing, (much more common in his Lordship's sphere than common people imagine,) had met with so signal a defeat, looked back with shame and regret upon his performances in that way. To stop the publication of his own reports, would be to betray their author; for if he claimed them from the journals to which they had been addressed, he must, of course, support the claim in his own character. This worried him; for although it seemed pretty clear that the truth would naturally find circulation through the press, even before the next morning, he anticipated seeing the account of what had been intended, published side by side with the detail of

1840



what had actually occurred, illustrated, no doubt, by the piquant remarks of the editor.

Lady Hester, according to the advice of the medical men, continued in bed, and Miss Everingham remained by her side. She spoke little, and appeared to find relief only in tears, which she shed abundantly. Her father periodically enquired after her, but at the suggestion of the physicians, made no effort to see her. Lady Katharine and Miss Oldham, after a short and very unsatisfactory interview with the Marquess, who took less pains than usual to conceal his displeasure at their extremely thoughtless conduct—to call it by no harsher name—quitted town for Richmond, attended by Cornet Richardson, and his friend Mr. Losh, an estimate of whose character and qualifications may be pretty fairly made from the knowledge of the fact, that he was the toady and “double” of the Cornet—the monkey of the ape—the shadow of the shade.

There was one person of the party, one actor in the play, whose situation appeared by far more painful than that of any other—Lord Elmsdale



himself;—he was left in the most awkward possible position. Lord Snowden had begged him not to quit the house: he had not courage to meet him—he hoped to hear something of Lady Hester that he might communicate to him—something consolatory. But what consolation could he offer? he had been told authoritatively, that his daughter's disease was in the mind; he had seen the shuddering repulse which she had given to Lord Elmsdale's attentions.—How was he to temporize, what was he to do?

At length he summoned sufficient resolution to see the unfortunate peer, who appeared almost stupified by the embarrassing nature of his situation. The Marquess lamented deeply the unfortunate circumstance of his daughter's illness—the physicians assured him that it was but a temporary affection,—a few days, he trusted, would set all to rights; indeed he hoped, that in the course of the evening, she might be sufficiently well to admit of their seeing her. That he had himself abstained from visiting her, lest she might be too much agitated. That he thought as the



sad interruption to the ceremony would, no doubt, be the subject of general conversation and remark, it would be well if the Earl and he were to show themselves in the streets together : it would have the " effect " of contradicting any absurd rumours, and show the town, that the *contre temps* of the morning, had only delayed for a short time the event from which they all hoped to derive so much happiness.

Lord Elmsdale, who was as shy as his intended father-in-law was proud, deceived as he was in the early part of the conversation, by the account which his Lordship gave of the nature and character of Lady Hester's illness, felt pleased at the proposition which the Marquess made, not only as it was likely to produce the anticipated effect, but as giving him some support and countenance in a very awkward position. He did not like the idea of even leaving the house alone, after so extraordinary a repulse ; and coinciding as he did, in the general view which the Marquess took, readily acceded to the proposal of walking down to Downing-street, where the



Marquess said he had merely to say three words to a certain person, but while he was there, he would take the opportunity of explaining the affair of the morning, in order to put it on a right footing in a high quarter, where it might otherwise have a bad "effect."

By this scheme, Lord Snowdon thought entirely to stop the idle babblers of the *pavé*, and establish in the bow window of White's, the fact, that although something had happened, every thing was *en train*, and going on smoothly.

Contrast this effective promenade, and all its studied frivolity, with the torture of poor Lady Hester's mind; compare the dignified stride of her noble father along the *trottoir* of St. James's-street, with the agonized writhings of his miserable daughter on her couch of sorrow. She, who cared nothing for effect, remembered with dread and terror, the sensations which overcame her when she sank lifeless on the earth, and when the triumph of her feelings over the artificial customs of society, had made her the subject of general conversation and remark. She, who shrank from



the public gaze, and sought in the privacy of retirement, that peace of mind which it seemed destined she was never to enjoy, felt all the misery of her situation pressing upon her with a weight, which she thought herself scarcely able to resist.

To the solicitude of Miss Everingham, she was indebted for all the support and consolation she had received. That her father had not visited her, she knew was by order of the physicians. Miss Oldham and Lady Katharine had been excluded under the same veto; "they would come to her when she was better." Better! of what?—she suffered no ill that time or medicine could cure. At her age, and with her general health, a few days, a few hours, might restore her bodily strength;—but to what was she to be restored? a renewal of Lord Elmsdale's suit—a repetition of the yet unfinished ceremonial.

"Better," said she to Miss Everingham, "better I should die. If I live, I live to eternal wretchedness, or I provoke my father's anger,



and incur his curse. Never, never, shall I forget the horrors of this morning. I felt so resolved, so firm, so determined to overcome all selfish feelings, to conquer feelings for others, which my poor heart tells me are not selfish; and to do my duty, my first earthly duty, to my father. Why was it I failed? it all seemed like a dream, like a vision; I only awoke to the reality, when I was asked that question upon which my fate depended. I felt my heart throb, my throat swell, a sudden darkness came over my eyes, and all I recollect is, finding myself in your arms, and in the care of a physician. Do you think, Anne," continued she, raising herself in bed, "will they force me to go through that again?"

"Compose yourself, dear child," said Miss Everingham; "no—no—it cannot be, you have evinced so strong a feeling, that if Lord Elmsdale have any feeling himself, he will not think of persisting in his suit."

"Aye, Anne," said Lady Hester, "but my father—what will *he* say?—how will *he* deter-



mine ? it is not what Lord Elmsdale wishes ; if my father continues fixed in his determination, he will insist upon the fulfilment of Lord Elmsdale's engagement. I know him, and I know his spirit,—he will not endure what he might conceive an indignity. Oh ! Anne, perhaps there may be blood shed for me,—perhaps my father's blood ! Save me from this, spare me, tell me only that there is a chance or risk of his safety, and I will to-morrow kneel again, and pledge myself to all the duties of a wife."

"My dear Lady Hester," said Miss Everingham, "you are conjuring up ills which never are likely to occur ;—your father and Lord Elmsdale are together—they are gone out together—he dines here."

"True, true, Anne," said Lady Hester, "but this is all in the supposition that I am yet to be his wife; there is the condition upon which tranquillity will be established. Would to Heaven, Alfred were here ! in *him* I should have a friend, an advocate—and yet, if *he* came—Ah—there it is—there it is—how foolish—how



wicked I have been. I have sinned deeply, for I have deceived my father—yes, Anne, I have spoken falsely to him, else this would not have happened;—and yet, when I said my heart was free, I meant to conquer every feeling by which it was actuated. I have struggled hard—indeed—indeed I have; I thought I had triumphed over our worst of enemies—self;—I have failed in the effort,—the ordeal proved me, and showed me my own infirmity.”

“This violence of grief must not be indulged in,” said Miss Everingham; “you have nothing with which to reproach yourself—the denial of an attachment which you had resolved to conquer was no falsehood; you conceived it past, and at all events, knowing the violence of Lord Snowdon’s disposition, you gave him the strongest earnest of your sincerity, by agreeing to his proposal for Lord Elmsdale. There is nothing in this, to occasion regret or remorse. It will be seen how he will act now. If the opportunity occurs, I shall not hesitate to impress upon his mind, my view of the course a man ought to pursue in such a case,



if indeed, after what has passed, a suggestion can be necessary."

"But then——"

"—— I must insist upon your keeping quiet," said Miss Everingham; "the only condition on which I will remain here is, that you will neither speak, nor agitate yourself."

"Speak!" said Lady Hester, "can I command my thoughts?"

"No, but the expression of your feelings wears and harasses you," said Miss Everingham.

"Collect yourself—it will be perhaps expected that I should dine at table to-day: if I do, I will give you a full report of what occurs; and above all, I am anxious to be there, in order to postpone your father's visit to you till to-morrow."

"I could not bear his reproaches to-night," said Lady Hester.

"It is better to let his feelings moderate," said Miss Everingham, "although, if I know him, he appears at present more mortified than angry—he thinks the delay in the marriage inconvenient, but ——"



“—— Delay,” said Lady Hester, “there it is—that word delay, speaks volumes.”

“He thinks it so,” replied Miss Everingham, “but I should be much surprised, if Lord Elmsdale can consider it in any other light than a termination to the affair.”

The conversation was here interrupted by a message from Lord Snowdon, who had returned from his excursion, and begged to see Miss Everingham. Of her he made the most anxious enquiries about Lady Hester; and Miss Everingham, extremely anxious that the case should appear as little severe as possible, pronounced her opinion, that perfect quiet was all that was necessary to restore her, that the shock her feelings had encountered was a severe one, but that she hoped by the morning she would be able, as she was most anxious, to see the Marquess.

Lord Snowdon knew as well as Miss Everingham, the cause of his daughter's illness, and of the exhibition in the morning. Of the object of her choice he had not the slightest notion—it was not his policy to attempt to find out—it was



not his design to affect to doubt her speedy convalescence: hence his calm and placid demeanour, hence, the tender message to his child. He found that Lord Elmsdale had fallen into the belief in which he desired to fix him,—that her indisposition was temporary, and wholly unconnected with the ceremony, farther than that, perhaps, the awfulness and importance of the obligation which it imposed, and the consequences resulting from the answer she was required to give, might have affected her, more especially when the trepidation of the “duncish curate,” as his Lordship called him, in putting the question, naturally infected the innocent girl who was to reply to it, with a corresponding timidity.

Lord Elmsdale, who considered the fulfilment of the engagement a matter of duty rather than inclination, agreed to all the Marquess's suggestions, and the more readily, because, although not a devoted studier of effect, like the Marquess, he could not help feeling that he should look very ridiculous, if the affair finally terminated as it now had “*re infecta*.” Thus it was that, to the



infinite satisfaction of the Marquess, the "gentle automaton," performed his part in the domestic drama, with the most imperturbable placidity.

Fire may be produced from ice, and it certainly appeared that Miss Everingham had resolved that it should not be her fault if the "dish of skimmed milk" was not curdled. Seizing an opportunity, of which, the Marquess, who although he dreaded her influence over his daughter, did not imagine she would avail herself, she sought the much damaged bridegroom in the drawing-room, where she found him sitting by himself, waiting the completion of the Marquess's somewhat elaborated toilette, for his re-appearance before dinner.

It would be uselessly occupying the time of the reader, to detail the conversation which occurred between his Lordship and the matured virgin, if conversation that may be called, in which one party only spoke and the other assented. She had made up her mind, without consulting Lady Hester, upon the course she would



pursue, and in fulfilment of her resolution, stated all the real circumstances of the case,—the dread that Lady Hester had of giving him pain, her grateful acknowledgment for the preference which he had shown her, her entire esteem for him, her anxiety for his friendship, and the utter impossibility of her returning his love.

“But why,” said his Lordship, in his peculiar lisping whisper, inaudible at two yards’ distance, “why not have told me so herself?”

“She dreaded the anger of her father,” said Miss Everingham.

“Ah, well!” said his Lordship, “do *you* know, that is the very thing about which I am so apprehensive even now.”

“I trust entirely to your honour, Lord Elmsdale,” said Miss Everingham, “not to betray her even at this juncture;—if it were possible for the Marquess to believe, that her disinclination not to your Lordship, but to marriage, arose from her affection for another, the consequences would be most serious.”

“Do I know the person to whom she is attach-



ed?" said Lord Elmsdale, with such infinite *naïveté*, as completely to astonish Miss Everingham.

"I cannot say," said Miss Everingham, "I most certainly do not. I admit that I have my suspicions—yet I have never heard her name him. But now recollect, Lord Elmsdale, how entirely I trust you: I am sure it is better to be explicit; but a word tending to excite the Marquess's suspicions"——

"Oh, dear no," said his Lordship, "of course I shall take care of that; but I think I may venture as far as expressing my own: because if I don't give some sort of reason he will, of course, expect me to conclude my engagement when Lady Hester recovers; and, I—I'm sure I admire her very much, and she is very charming; and I appreciate her, and all that: but I certainly would not inconvenience her—that is, I mean, I would not make her unhappy by forcing her into a marriage against her inclinations for all the world—that, you know, would be the height of folly."

"I am glad to find you so ready to enter into



my views," said Miss Everingham, who saw, in every moment she conversed with him, and heard, in every word he uttered, fresh justifications of Lady Hester's dislike.

"It will be so awkward," continued the sapient Earl, whose merits never really appeared, until drawn out by important business, "about the carriages—and the plate—and all the things—the preparations—and then I shall look so very ridiculous to all my people and connexions—that's what—I"——

"Any thing is better, surely," said Miss Everingham, "than beginning a long life of continual unhappiness?"

"To be sure, yes," replied his Lordship, "only I think, perhaps—if Lady Hester—now that every thing is settled—if she could but make up her mind—I don't see why we might not be very happy; my place in the north is very retired and quiet—and—I—however, if you think—I am sure you have known her longer than I have, and are better able to judge"——



"I am quite decided in my opinion," said Miss Everingham.

"Ah, then," said his Lordship, "of course it is of no use arguing,"—as if he ever did argue—"I must, of course, make the best of it. I suppose I had better come to an understanding with the Marquess this evening?"

"If you agree with me, certainly," said Miss Everingham.

"Oh, I do perfectly agree with you," said his Lordship; "nothing can be clearer—only I wish I had known it before—that's all. When I have made up my mind to any thing, I hate to be disappointed, if it is ever so trifling."

Miss Everingham looked at him, but he did not see the expression of *her* face, for he was looking at his own in the glass over the fire-place, and settling the arrangement of his stock.

"I hope," added the eloquent pleader, "that I have made you understand dear Lady Hester's feelings?"

"Oh, perfectly," said Lord Elmsdale.



“ I mean,” continued Miss Everingham, “ I have, I hope, taught you to appreciate the delicacy of her position, and her sensitive apprehension lest she should offend you by”——

“ Oh, dear no,” said Lord Elmsdale, “ I think she is quite right. Nothing could be more foolish, as you say—no—only—I—I must see about it. I had better, perhaps, leave town and write to the Marquess. I am not a very good hand at a letter—but I have a friend who, I think, would help me ;—but then—then it would look so odd going out of town to spend the honeymoon without one’s bride—wouldn’t it ?”

“ No, I would *speak* to Lord Snowdon,” said Miss Everingham, “ and I am sure if you do, the point will be settled.”

“ I am sure of that too,” said Lord Elmsdale, “ but then I am not quite so sure how ; if I knew that—I—at all events, Lady Hester shall not be annoyed on my account.”

“ She will bless you a thousand times, Lord Elmsdale, when I tell her this,” said Miss Everingham, quite delighted with having worked her



companion into an expression of something like feeling.

“I’m sure she’s very kind,” said his Lordship, with a coldness and calmness that would rather have suited the acknowledgment of a bow than a benediction.

“I shall tell her all you say,” said the kind friend, “and she will sleep the better.”

“I’m very glad you think so,” said the phlegmatic peer.

Miss Everingham timed her attack with great judgment, for she had scarcely carried her point with the noble Lord, when the Marquess arrived in the drawing-room. He appeared calm, but looked pale, and was evidently suffering much annoyance. He was vexed that the Oldhams had not staid in town to dinner; he had read a long account of the failure of the marriage in the Evening papers, headed, ‘*Extraordinary circumstance*,’ he had received a note from Downing-street; and a letter from the Bishop of Dorchester, excusing himself for not being able to perform the marriage cere-



mony, and explaining, that the Marquess's letter had not reached him at his palace, he having been absent on a tour of Confirmations: the epistle concluded with a pious anticipation of Lady Hester's happiness, an eulogium upon her merits and virtues, and a prospective view of the domestic felicity of Lord and Lady Elmsdale. All these things were mingled in his mind; and although he inquired after his daughter, his solicitude was not marked with the tenderness which, to her alone of all his connexions, he usually adopted.

Dinner was announced—and any thing more melancholy than the meal was, perhaps, never seen. It was quite impossible that any one of the three persons at table could rally. The Marquess felt that he could have almost endured the senseless rattle of that invaluable addition to a cherry-tree in the fruit season, Lady Katharine Oldham, in preference to the gloomy silence which pervaded the dinner-room. The attending servants felt it part of their duty to look grave, and many a funeral “baked meat”



feast has shone more gaily than this select banquet on the occasion of Lord Elmsdale's half-finished marriage.

Lord Elmsdale himself appeared dumb, and almost motionless, during the repast. He felt himself an object of ridicule even in the eyes of the Marquess's menials; and, moreover, anticipated the task he had undertaken of coming to a decision in the course of the evening; convinced, as probably the reader also is, that the Marquess would hold him to his bargain, and force his daughter into the performance of *her* part of the compact; his anxiety for its completion being greatly sharpened by the consciousness of a declaration made first to himself, and then to her, that he would not marry until she was established in the world. This rested in his heart and in his mind—"the Plinlimmons never broke a promise, made even to themselves."

Miss Everingham, very soon after the dessert was put down, excused herself on the plea of anxiety to see dear Lady Hester, and departed



forthwith, not without receiving a most piteous look from the Earl, as if imploring her to stay a little longer, and a request from the Marquess to let him have an account of his dear Hester as speedily as possible.

“I wonder,” said his Lordship, “when she will be sufficiently recovered to bring this matter to a termination. It is a very curious thing to see how women are affected. Our family have no complaints—I mean no constitutional complaints; we die, like other people—that’s true—but to all the common diseases of the world, in general, it seems we are not obnoxious.”

“That is very curious,” said Lord Elmsdale.

“Peculiar,” said the Marquess. “Not that these natural privileges are altogether confined to our blood; the Stuarts, certainly, had the inherent prerogative of curing disorders by the touch; and we—as far as I can read—have never suffered from any ordinary malady. My great-uncle’s grandfather’s first-cousin’s sister died in the early part of George the First’s reign, of consumption; but then it was a very rare disorder—



der—very few people, if any, had suffered by it; its subsequent prevalence is attributed by some to the general use of tea. I recollect hearing that King James the First once said to an ancestor of mine, the thirteenth Baron Malvern, that tobacco was an invention of the devil himself; but, for *my* part, I think the introduction of tea as injurious to the health as the other is unpleasant to the senses.”

This brief disquisition was intended to establish in that, which the gentle automaton was pleased to consider his mind, that the indisposition of Lady Hester was altogether bodily.

“I don’t dislike a cigar, myself,” said his Lordship, a saying which was received with a look of ineffable contempt from his exalted companion.

“I think it must have been the chilliness of the air in the church,” said Lord Snowdon, “immediately after the hurry and excitement of our progress, that affected my poor child.”

“I dare say it was,” said Lord Elmsdale.

“And yet the weather is not very cold yet.”



"No, certainly not," said the Earl.

A servant entered the room, and said that Miss Everingham had sent down word that Lady Hester seemed much better.

"If Sir Henry calls," said the Marquess, "beg him to come to me after he has seen her Ladyship.—I'm glad to hear that."

"So am I," said Lord Elmsdale.

"It has been a sad blow upon us, Elmsdale," continued the Marquess, "a very sad blow—a disappointment one could not have calculated upon. The evening papers give a very fair account of it; they make a sort of joke of the young parson's running away, and the old doctor's taking his place, which is low and vulgar, and might have been spared; but, for *my* part, I care nothing for what appears in the newspapers. I suppose the people who write them, get their accounts of weddings, and dinners, and balls, from our servants or their own spies. It can, however, make no difference to people in our sphere and so I never interfere one way or another—it is quite beneath us."



"Oh, quite," said Lord Elmsdale, whose fashionable notoriety had not yet become at all troublesome to him.

"Well," said the Marquess, "if wine can banish sorrow we have need of some—help yourself. I think it would be well, Elmsdale, to fix a day for the marriage, as soon as we can ascertain about Hester's health; the more speedily public gossip—not that I care for it in the slightest degree—is stopped, the better. We will hear what our excellent doctor says, if he comes, and regulate our proceedings accordingly."

"Yes, that will be the best way," said Lord Elmsdale, "or—perhaps—I—was thinking—of going out of town—if"——

"Out of town, my dear fellow!" exclaimed the Marquess, in a tone of familiarity quite surprising to his timid guest, "what on earth should you go out of town for?"

"To wait for Lady Hester's recovery," said the Earl.

"Why, I trust, she will be quite well, almost



as soon as you could order horses to your carriage," said the Marquess.

"I don't know—I—think probably not," said Lord Elmsdale.

"Have you seen the physicians?"

"Oh, dear no—no," said his Lordship; "only I think it will require more time than perhaps you imagine, to induce her to submit—I mean—consent—agree—in short I"—

"My dear Elmsdale," said Lord Snowdon, "why, you are dreaming; a lady may have a fainting fit on a Monday morning, and yet be at a ball on Monday evening. I don't go to see her, because they advise her being kept quiet, but three days will restore her, and I am anxious, because the St. Leonard's family are staying in town *express*."

"I really think," said the Earl, looking serious, pale, and frightened, "that we ought not to hurry on the affair."

"What an extraordinary cautiousness on *your* part," said the Marquess.

"I doubt," said the Earl, "very much doubt,



from what I have heard, whether Lady Hester will ever sufficiently recover to complete our marriage."

"Complete!" cried the Marquess, "what do you mean by complete?—it is complete—perfectly complete—in every particular save one—its termination."

"Yes, but that is a very important particular," said the Earl. "I dare say it may be cold—or it may be heat—or it may be fever—or it may be alarm—but it's very curious to me, that the attack should have reached its crisis, just when the young lady was asked the leading question, upon which the whole gist of the ceremony turned."

"Do you imagine, Lord Elmsdale," said the Marquess, "that the scene we witnessed this morning, proceeded from any disinclination on the part of my daughter to accept you as her husband?"

"Why, now, to tell you the truth, my Lord, I do," said the Earl, in a sort of candid, conciliatory tone, which it is quite impossible to convey to



the reader, but which seemed to imply, "there, now you have my opinion, and if you break my head for my ingenuousness, I cannot help it."

"You astonish me!" said the Marquess. "Can you believe so ill of a daughter of mine—of a daughter of my house, as to imagine she would carry matters so far, so disingenuously?"

"I do not accuse her of disingenuousness," said Lord Elmsdale; "on the contrary, I think she has never evinced the slightest affection for me—that I *must* say."

"Then might I ask, Lord Elmsdale," said the Marquess, "what might have been your inducement to continue your attentions, and carry them to the extreme point?"

"I admire Lady Hester, very much indeed," said Lord Elmsdale, who had never said so much in his life before, "and I felt convinced I could be happy with her; indeed I think I could make myself very comfortable with any woman who was kind to me, if she felt so disposed,—and so I went on; and seeing that you had entirely set your heart upon the match—and I"——



“ Me ! Lord Elmsdale,” exclaimed the Marquess, “ how do you mean that *I* had set my heart upon the match ?”

“ It struck me that you wished it particularly.”

“ For my daughter’s sake I wished it,” said the Marquess ; “ that is, if she wished it too.”

“ Ah ! that is exactly the point,” replied Lord Elmsdale ; “ I am convinced she does *not* wish it. And I am quite sure,—I speak from what I have seen in other cases,—far as the matter has proceeded, I am sure if it were practicable, it would be a wise thing, even now, to break it off.”

“ Indeed ! that is your opinion, my Lord ?” said the Marquess ; “ and pray, Sir, what hinders its being broken off ?”

“ That you must decide,” said Lord Elmsdale ; “ as far as I am concerned, I repeat I think it would be wise to do so ; but if it could be considered in any way casting a reflection upon your family”——

“ Upon *my* family, Lord Elmsdale !” cried



the Marquess, "how should *your* violation of a compact, Sir, possibly injure my family?"

"I am not going to violate a compact," replied the Earl, "on the contrary, I am ready to fulfil it; but I repeat, if it could be avoided, I am sure we should be consulting Lady Hester's happiness by adopting that course—I know it is too late now"——

"My Lord, it is by no means too late," said the Marquess. "Do you imagine that I shall suffer my daughter to be taken from me, by a person expressing the sentiments you have just now broached? What grounds have you for supposing yourself disagreeable to her?"

"I have already said—the public have already seen," said the Earl. "I imagine I cut a very ridiculous figure this morning; and I tell you, Lord Snowdon, in perfect sincerity of heart, that if the attempt to unite us was to be renewed, the scene of to-day would be repeated. She dislikes me—she has convinced me of it—and although I have the highest regard and affection for her, I think it my duty to her and to myself, to you,



and to all of us, to declare my opinion upon that point most clearly and unequivocally."

Lord Snowdon entirely agreed with Lord Elmsdale in his view of this part of the subject: he could not blame his child's taste, but the thing that puzzled his Lordship was, how the gentle automaton had found out the fact. Who had been enlightening him? he had not been out of his sight above half an hour in the day, and that half hour he was in his own drawing-room—it struck him at last.

"You were in conversation with Miss Everingham, when I came into the drawing-room before dinner, Lord Elmsdale?" said the Marquess.

"I was."

"I conclude that you gleaned from her the ideas which you have now adopted as your own?" said Lord Snowdon.

"I gleaned them from my own observation," said the Earl; "and however much gratified and flattered I must be by having such a wife, if I could avert the evil, I would avoid the pos-



session of her, if it were to make her miserable, which I am sure it would."

"You undervalue yourself," said the Marquess, "Hester speaks of you with kindness and esteem."

"Ah!" said Lord Elmsdale, "the whole affair is an error, from beginning to end. I repeat I am ready to fulfil my engagement, and the more ready, because I see no chance of withdrawing without an *éclât*, which to me would be very disagreeable."

"The public *éclât*, I think you as much overrate," said the Marquess, "as you under-rate your own private qualities and merits."

"I see nothing like happiness in the prospect," answered the Earl; "and if I am satisfied—indeed I *am* already—of Lady Hester's indifference—if a course could be pointed out by which I could retire without injuring her"—

"Sir," said Lord Snowdon, flying into the most furious rage, "you have already talked of injuring my daughter by your withdrawal. You tell me she has publicly exhibited her indiffer-



ence—her dislike—is not that sufficient reason for your withdrawal? I am not the man to hear your desire to withdraw from my family expressed as a threat. If such be your feeling, there can be no difficulty in gratifying it, at your earliest convenience.”

“What should I do, Lord Snowdon?” said the Earl, who found that he had fired the train.

“Do, my Lord Elmsdale!” said the Marquess, “take your hat and go; and if Lady Hester does not give herself the trouble of inquiring after you, I shall not trouble her by mentioning your Lordship’s name again to her. My son has not the advantage of your acquaintance, and has declined even the honour of being present at your marriage. Nobody will question your decision—at least nobody on *my* part or in *my* behalf—whatever arrangements may be necessary to conclude this separation of our interests, can be made by our respective men of business.”

“I hope, Lord Snowdon”——said Lord Elmsdale.

“——Our hopes, my Lord, are at an end,”



said the Marquess ; saying which, his Lordship rang the bell—the servant entered.

“ Lord Elmsdale’s carriage,” said the Marquess.

The servant saw that a storm had been raging, and proceeded to find the chariot, which, if the Marquess had not either resolved to sacrifice every thing to effect, or had not in reality lost his recollection in his rage, he must have known could not at that early hour have arrived.

Lord Elmsdale did not, as indeed he well could not, hesitate as to his next move : but making a slight, and what he meant to be a particularly dignified bow to the Marquess, quitted the room, and in a few minutes afterwards the house.

Thus had the Marquess of Snowdon, in a moment of irritated pride, kicked down the fabric which he had for months been constructing with infinite pains and labour ; and thus had Lord Elmsdale, by a simple appeal—simple enough—to nature and truth, achieved for poor Lady Hester, what nothing else in the world could have accomplished. The idea of condescension



or consideration from the second Earl of Elmsdale, whose grandfather had been a sugar-baker, was to the Marquess of Snowdon unbearable; and without at the moment reflecting upon the "effect," which the result of the affair would have upon the world, or upon what was almost as dear to him as the world's opinion, his union with Elizabeth Oldham, he spurned with indignation the alliance, which two days before he lauded to the skies, as the most admirable connexion that could be found for his daughter.

To see Lady Hester *then* would be in the highest degree imprudent; imbued as he was with the belief of Miss Everingham's active agency in the whole affair, he dare not trust himself with an interview with her. It was early, but he could not bear to be alone—he ordered his carriage immediately, and drove to Brookes's, having of late, gone there rarely, and having been put up at White's the week before; there he remained till about twelve, and thence proceeded to Crockford's, when, finding nobody, he returned to Grosvenor-square, and having heard that Lady



Hester was going on favourably, retired to bed, but not to sleep.

In the meantime Lord Elmsdale, who, although quiet as a lamb, felt there was something due to his character and station, proceeded to the Travellers, where he found—that, which, they say, is so difficult to find upon any other occasion—a friend; to whom he detailed the occurrences of the evening, subsequently consulting him upon the propriety, or rather the necessity, of sending the Marquess a message. As the incivilities of the Illustrious were exhibited in a *tête-à-tête*; and no personal rudeness had been displayed which could justify such a proceeding; and as Lord Elmsdale told the story, which nobody but the Marquess himself could contradict, (and he was the last man in the world to admit himself to have been in a passion,) the “friend at the Travellers,” scouted the idea of calling him out; and the seceding Earl retired peacefully to his residence at half-past eleven o’clock, and before one, was as sound asleep as if he had not been half-married in the morning.



## CHAPTER XI.

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WHEN the Marquess awoke after a restless night, he felt a confused recollection of having taken a very decisive measure the preceding evening, with regard to his daughter's marriage; and, in that brief moment of mystification, when, between sleeping and waking, the imaginary and the real are so curiously blended, the impression upon his mind was, that he had acted not only rudely but rashly. In a few moments, however, he was "himself again," and resolved, that having taken this course, nothing should divert him from it, or induce him to seek a reconciliation with Lord Elmsdale, in whose opinions of his daughter's feelings and sentiments his Lordship could not help perfectly agreeing.



His first inquiry was after Lady Hester, in reply to which a message from Miss Everingham informed him that she had slept during the night, and was much more calm and less feverish than she had been on the preceding evening. The Marquess resolved to see her after breakfast, and then having attended an appointment in Downing-street—the most fruitful in events of any he had ever made—he should proceed to Richmond to dine with his affianced one, and communicate the entire “break off” between the Earl and Lady Hester.

While he was at breakfast, Miss Everingham made her appearance, and in a moment afterwards was perfectly sensible that something had occurred to ruffle the serenity of the Magnifico. His Lordship’s answer to the common place inquiry after his health bespoke the “temper of his mind.”

“I am as well, Ma’am,” said his Lordship, “as you could expect to find me.”

“I am sure”—Miss Everingham was going to say.



“ I am serious, Miss Everingham—Lord Elmsdale is gone, Ma’am—gone from this house for ever. You may tell my daughter *that*, after your own fashion. Lord Elmsdale thinks she will be glad to hear it—so do you—so do I; but the departure of Lord Elmsdale is consequent neither upon my daughter’s conduct, nor upon mine—but upon some idle gossip of your’s, Ma’am.”

Nobody who had not heard the sonorous “Ma’am,” with which the Marquess’s angry addresses to ladies invariably terminated, can imagine the harsh and tremendous twang with which the word came from his Lordship’s lips.

“ Mine, Lord Snowdon !”

“ Yes, Ma’am, your’s,” said the Marquess. “ You had some conversation with his Lordship, before dinner yesterday; from that—whatever its points might have been—he gathered the idea—if not the certainty—that Lady Hester’s illness at church arose from disinclination to him, which disinclination to him has its origin in an affection for somebody else.”



“My Lord, I”——

“Aye, Ma’am, I dare say there is no truth in this,” interrupted the Marquess. “I think a daughter of mine would scarcely permit her feelings to overcome her duty, and that this prepossession of her’s is all imaginary; but the Earl does not think so: he is a weak, empty person, and his mind is soon imbued with the most absurd notions;—so it is—he is convinced that her heart is engaged—and so are *you*, Ma’am.”

“Indeed,” said Miss Everingham, trembling from head to foot, “I”——

“I want no discussions,” said Lord Snowdon, “nor shall I, at the present moment, press her upon the subject. I have taken a line, and adopted a course, which must be followed and acted upon. Tell Hester, in the first instance, to have the jewels and trinkets with which Lord Elmsdale presented her, properly packed up and sent down to me, in order that they may be returned.”

“My Lord,” said Miss Everingham, “how



shall I be able to break this important intelligence to her, in her present state of mind?"

"What! Ma'am," said the Marquess, "you think the joy will kill her? No: you may tell her in safety; the Plinlimmons, thank Heaven, have strength of mind to bear surprises."

"Her mind has been sufficiently tried during the last four-and-twenty hours," said Miss Everingham.

"Well, Ma'am," said Lord Snowdon, "all *I* consider at the moment are the proprieties and decencies of society; it would have an exceedingly bad 'effect' if she were to retain these jewels an hour after the final rejection of her lover; for, recollect, Ma'am, it was *I* who sent away Lord Elmsdale; and, recollect, that, in telling this story, as you necessarily must, the point is, that the final separation took place at *my* desire—it is no defection on the part of Lord Elmsdale, Ma'am—remember *that*—but an expulsion on mine."

"Would you not see Lady Hester yourself, Lord Snowdon?" said Miss Everingham, whose



alarm at the responsibility which was imposed upon her by being made the channel of such a communication, was strangely combined with excessive pleasure excited by the circumstance itself, and who was in such a state of agitation that she almost unconsciously suggested the thing which, of all others, would have been most dreadful to Lady Hester.

“No, Ma’am,” said the Marquess, “you have been the principal cause of this *éclat*,—reap the only advantage you are likely to obtain from it, in the gratification of communicating the success of your manoeuvres to your *protégée*.”

“Indeed, Lord Snowdon,” said Miss Everingham, who had forgotten the extent of her communicativeness to Lord Elmsdale the day before, “I have never”——

“I tell you, Ma’am, I desire no discussion,” replied his Lordship; “for the short time which we shall continue inmates of the same house, let there be peace between us. I have observed of late, a disposition on your part, and on that of my daughter, to rebel against my decisions, and



oppose my desires. That she should be in some degree discomposed by my intentions with respect to my second marriage, is natural, and pardonable—and I forgive her; but I regret that any influence should have been used to destroy all my arrangements about her union with Lord Elmsdale, which, for all our sakes, was most desirable, and the frustration of which, places her in a most awkward and delicate position.”

This was the first “notice to quit” that Miss Everingham had received. Her mind was satisfied upon that point—her sailing orders had arrived, and the question which she had long been debating in her mind was completely set at rest. Till now she had imagined that perhaps she might continue to hold on, after the marriage of the new Lady Snowdon, and so between the family in Grosvenor-square, and that of the Elmsdale’s in the country, make out her year as usual.

“No, Ma’am,” continued the Marquess, “do you tell my daughter what has happened. I am going out on important business, but shall return at two; then, knowing as she will, the great out-



line of the affair, she may, perhaps, bear a visit from me. That I am mortified, I admit—and deeply; but I can scarcely blame her dislike of Lord Elmsdale—he is a silly person; and, in short, I consider the result, however unlucky in appearance, as an escape in fact. You will let every body understand, Miss Everingham, that I am exceedingly gratified at having been able, with honour and propriety, to back out; that is the tone—and the right feeling upon the subject. So now, Ma'am, I must wish you a good morning for the present; remember to have all the trinkets ready for me when I return, and tell Hester to expect me at two; and tell her, Ma'am, that I do not believe a word about any prior attachment on her part, and that I forgive her for *her* share in this business."

To all this Miss Everingham bowed assent, and so they parted; she, however, not believing one syllable his Lordship said, with regard either to his feelings or forgiveness, but, on the contrary being convinced that he was acting a part, in what, from all she knew of his character and



temper, promised to turn out a domestic tragedy.

To different scenes the actors immediately repaired:—Miss Everingham to communicate what had occurred to Lady Hester—Lord Snowdon to hear what the Premier had to communicate.

The difficulty which Miss Everingham experienced arose, as the Marquess had truly said, from the certainty she felt of the powerful effect which her intelligence would produce upon Lady Hester's mind. This difficulty, however, was most curiously and considerably diminished by the circumstance of Lady Hester's preparation for the intelligence by her maid, who was in possession of the whole history of the "break off" long before the Marquess thought proper to make the communication to Miss Everingham. Lord Elmsdale's valet had made his call at Lord Snowdon's early in the day, and detailed the arrangements made by his Lord for his immediate departure to the Continent; the travelling carriage having been sent to the coachmaker's,



in order that the united arms of Plinlimmon and Mudge (the family name of Lord Elmsdale was Mudge !) might be painted out ; all the servants hired for the increased establishment being to be paid off in the course of the afternoon.

“ Putting all these little circumstances together, Mrs. Simmons,” said Lord Elmsdale’s man to Lady Hester’s woman, “ it satisfies me that there is a screw loose somewhere ; what it is, in course, I don’t pretend to know—as how should I ?—but, as far as the marriage between *our* houses is concerned, rely upon it, it’s N. G—no go.”

Fired by this intelligence, so eloquently conveyed, was it possible for Mrs. Simmons to conceal her knowledge—or restrain her curiosity ? Knowing so much, she must know more ; and knowing that her Lady certainly did not know so much as she did, could she “ hide her candle under a bushel ? ”—could she seem ignorant of what must be generally known in a few hours, and what was then a secret ? Of what use is a secret if one mayn’t tell it ?—thought Mrs.



Simmons; and thus it was that Lady Hester, although unable clearly to understand what had actually happened, was, in a great degree, prepared for the details which were to justify the extraordinary intelligence of her intelligent servant.

It is impossible to describe the relief which the poor young lady felt, the weight which seemed to be lifted from her heart, when she became fully sensible of what had really occurred. She, like Miss Everingham, dreaded the calmness of her father—a vindictive man when calm is a tremendous object; but let his anger take what shape it might, any thing was better than the marriage with Lord Elmsdale, whose bad qualities, she was convinced, would now be magnified by her father, whose course, in affecting to consider the frustration of the match he so earnestly desired on the previous day, a most happy event, she had anticipated even before her kind friend told her, what “tone” was to be given to the affair, in order to produce the “effect” the Marquess intended.



At the Premier's, much more decisive results were obtained. Lord Snowdon's propositions had received the most marked attention, and at the crisis, into the details of which it would be quite superfluous here to enter, his aid and support was of such importance, as to be supposed capable of turning the nicely balanced scale of parties. The dissolution of parliament was still delayed; and an idea appeared to prevail, that ministers would meet the House of Commons as it was then constituted: in this case a difficulty arose about Lord Snowdon's zeal, for it was hardly to be hoped that the five whigs whom he had returned, would all immediately turn right round at his Lordship's suggestion. Upon minor points, and indeed upon many points, these independent patriots would not have hesitated to put their helms hard up, and go about, as the breath of their patron filled the sails; but they had characters to lose, and therefore it was only in the event of a dissolution, that Lord Snowdon could be of material service, for, if the parliament met, and his five declined ratting—this, how-



ever, was supposing an extreme case—he could only get them out, by so far wounding their politics as to induce them to take the Chiltern Hundreds, and make room for other men of better politics; but, this could not be done in time to secure their votes upon the first important divisions of the session. Nevertheless, there they were, bound hand and foot, and delivered over to their enemies, it depending entirely upon their own strength and spirit, whether they would break their bonds, and save their honour by a speedy flight.

As to the Marquess's influence in the upper house, it had certainly received a blow in the difference between him and Lord Elmsdale. One vote gone—but this was a matter upon which he did not dwell, and his power was still important;—the bargain too was already made; and this, with a few conditions annexed to the office itself, formed the leading features of his negotiation for the desired Governor-generalship. On this important morning, those conditions were accepted, the agreement was ratified, and the Marquess



congratulated by the Premier upon his appointment to the Indian Vice-royalty. It was not desirable that it should be publicly mentioned just yet—but it was *his*.

Many people have seen the vast Gog and Magog high aloft in the Guildhall of the City of London, and from below, marvelled at their stupendous size. They were Boralowskis to the million, compared with Lord Snowdon in his own estimation, as he walked along Whitehall on his return towards Grosvenor-square. His eye seemed to reproach the sentinels on duty for not saluting him, and he appeared even disappointed that the King's guard itself did not turn out as he approached.

All great benefits have their drawbacks—the sun hath its spots; and the corresponding evil of the Marquess's great good was, that he was bound not to mention it publicly. Every body he met, bowed and spoke as usual; his rank and station as it was, commanded the respect he received; but, if they had only known that he was the real, sole, and original Bahauder, Go-



vernor-general of uncountable millions—but, no matter, the day would soon come when it must be known; and in the meanwhile, to no ear but one would he confide it—to his Elizabeth's—she was an exception to any general rule of silence, *she* was his own, and moreover destined to share with him the glittering musnud, and protect the suffering people of Munneystumpum.

He had now to perform a different duty: he had to descend from his oriental stilts, slide down from his lofty howdah, fixed on his tallest elephant, and betake himself to his suffering daughter's bed-side; to be sure, the certainty of his elevation to the long-desired honour had sweetened his Lordship's temper,—it made him think of the broken marriage as something of secondary consideration, which would scarcely have troubled his mind, if it had not upset his arrangements for the establishment of Lady Hester previous to his departure.

Had she married, all difficulty about her, during his absence, would have been obviated,—she would have been settled, and there an end;



but now, he was puzzled how he should act: of course she could not remain living with Miss Everingham in his town and country houses; it would be necessary that she should reside with her aunt, an aunt, who was the aversion of the Marquess, because she never had forgiven him his conduct to her late sister during her life-time, and because she never humoured his pride or encouraged his vanity, and above all, because she believed in his resemblance to the facetious and versatile Mr. Buggins, of the T. R. C. G.

About his son, the Marquess had made up his mind not to think at all. He had written him a brief but severe answer to his letter, of which he had never spoken truly to Lady Hester. He reproached him with ungraciousness and ingratitude, and supposed the case of his refusing to join him in making the necessary provision for the future Marchioness. To this last part of his letter he had as yet received no answer,—he expected it daily; his hope of compliance rested rather upon the influence of Burford over Lord Malvern, than his son's own feelings: he had,



he felt convinced, secured Burford's most strenuous exertions in his favour, and ensured his co-operation in rendering Malvern eventually reconciled to the marriage. How far his Lordship had succeeded, we, who know something of "both sides," may perhaps be better able to judge than his Lordship.

Incidents began to thicken: just as the Marquess turned the corner of Pall Mall, he met his excellent friend the Duke of St. Leonard's, to whom he was himself going, to relieve him and the Duchess from any farther delay in town, in the expectation of completing the match between Lady Hester and Lord Elmsdale. The Duke, however, had heard of the separation, and spared Lord Snowdon any lengthened explanation of the circumstances. The Duchess had called, he said, in Grosvenor-square, to inquire after Lady Hester, and as circumstances had occurred, they had prepared to leave London the next day.

"You have heard the news?" said the Duke.

"No,—what?" said Lord Snowdon.

"Poor Lord Wansborough is dead."



“ Lord Wansborough !” said the Marquess.

“ Yes,” said the Duke; “ there are a regiment, a government, and a blue riband, at the disposal of ministers—what lucky dogs !”

The Duke was a whig,—he thought the Marquess one—they had not talked politics together for the last six weeks. The words ‘lucky dogs,’ which were used by his Grace in a sneering and reproachful sense, sounded like music to the Marquess’s ears; — the desired, promised riband vacant—poor dear Lord Wansborough—excellent, amiable man—all talent and virtue—gone to heaven, if ever man went there, and, better than all, had left his George and garter behind him.

“ Which way are you walking, Duke ?” said Lord Snowdon.

“ I am going to the Travellers,” was the reply.

“ I’ll walk there with you,” said his Lordship.

And so he did, but he did not stay there. Like Horne Tooke, the Duke stopped at Brentford,—the Marquess went farther ; insatiable rat as he



was, he returned forthwith to Downing-street, and communicated the intelligence he had just received of Lord Wansborough's death to the Premier.

"Yes, we knew that last night," was the answer; which puzzled him, because he certainly had been promised the first blue riband, and it might at least have been mentioned to him when he was there before; as it had not, he entered his claim, got no specific reply, and walked back again to Grosvenor-square.

The agitation, the aching anxiety, that sort of feverish doubt which hangs over a man, promised a thing and not quite certain that he is to have it; a dread of hearing even the surmises of his own acquaintance, who, ignorant that it is the object of his ambition, appropriate it to half a dozen different people,—all this, mixed up with his family worries, preyed upon the Marquess, and sent him to Lady Hester's room absolutely calm, and even indifferent upon the point of which she so much dreaded the discussion.



"How do you feel yourself, Hester dear," said his Lordship, seating himself at the bed-side, and taking one of her feverish hands in his.

"Better, Sir," said Lady Hester.

"You were surprised, I conclude," said the Marquess, "at the abrupt termination of our connexion with Lord Elmsdale."

Lady Hester could answer only by tears.

"You must not flurry yourself, dear child," said the Marquess; "I believe you are indebted to Miss Everingham for the *denouement*."

"Me! my Lord?" said Miss Everingham, who was sitting at a table at the other end of the room.

"I think so," said Lord Snowdon; "however, my maxim is, never let the world see that a family is agitated by domestic conflicts,—it has the worst possible effect. Nothing could be more injurious to you, my dear child, than the idea that Lord Elmsdale had been driven away, by reports of your having conceived some prior attachment, which I am convinced Miss Everingham's conversation with him led him to believe.



This induced him to use expressions to me, conveying an idea, that if I proposed to force him into the marriage, he was ready to submit; but that he felt it right to do so, only lest you should suffer in the estimation of the world by his declining it. This I could not endure: the idea that the grandson of Mr. Mudge, the sugar-baker, of Pudding-lane, fancied himself condescending to preserve the respectability of a daughter of mine, was too ridiculous to be borne for a moment. I confess I lost my temper, and behaved even rudely; but I was angry, and am ready to answer for it if called upon."

"Oh! my dear father," said Lady Hester, the remark so sadly coinciding with her previously expressed apprehension of some personal quarrel, in which the Marquess might be consequently involved.

"Do not alarm yourself, Hester," said the Marquess; "these mongrels never fight—they snap and snarl, and run away;—however, had he been a man of my own pretensions I could not have endured the notion of being patronized



and supported. No—I declare if it had been the oldest duke of the empire, who had been on the point of marriage with you, under the same circumstances, I should have acted similarly, even if there were no chance of your ever having another offer. I would rather than submit to such an indignity, see you married to my steward—or Malvern’s tutor—or anybody.”

This was an accidental wound, but it was a sharp one. Luckily, in the energy of declamation, the Marquess had let go his daughter’s hand, or he would have felt the effect of the shock he had inflicted. What did he mean?—that was Lady Hester’s first thought when she recovered from the blow—did he suspect—did he fancy—had Miss Everingham, in her zeal and anxiety to produce the effect which she had so successfully brought about, and which now filled them with so much terror, either by accident or design, glanced at the individual who had gained Lady Hester’s heart?

“My mind,” continued Lord Snowdon, “is at present too deeply occupied with matters of



first-rate importance—public matters—in which I am likely soon to be more deeply engaged,” (never did man so long to tell the whole history of the Governor-generalship and the Garter) “to enter into a discussion upon the arrangements which it will be necessary to make upon my marriage, now that yours is at an end. I shall probably leave England for some time; and I think it might be advisable to inquire of your aunt, Lady Ospringe, whether she would be inclined to afford you a home during my absence. I need not,” continued he, “I am sure, refer to the fancy conjured up in Lord Elmsdale’s head—brains he has none—about your having formed an attachment for some other person.”

“Rely upon it, Sir,” said Lady Hester, “you shall never have occasion to reproach me upon that point.”

“That is somewhat evasive, Hester,” said the Marquess; “the tone and manner of the answer, are not marked with your usual frankness and candour.”

“Consider, Lord Snowdon,” said Miss Ever-



ingham, "Lady Hester has had much upon her mind within the last few hours."

"Not too much upon her mind, Ma'am, to answer *me*, when I ask a question," said his Lordship.

"I mean to say," said Lady Hester, sobbing, "that Lord Elmsdale's retirement can have no connexion with such a subject—I—cannot speak—trust me, my father—trust me—you shall never have a cause of complaint."

"This is trifling! This, Ma'am," said his Lordship, addressing Miss Everingham, "this is a corroboration of your tattle—this authenticates your gossip! Who is the man? tell me this instant."

"Father, dear father!"—said Lady Hester.

"I insist upon knowing! Who is it?" cried the Marquess.

"Mr. Burford, my Lord," said a voice, soft and gentle, to the infinite astonishment of Lady Hester and Miss Everingham.

"Who's there?" exclaimed the Marquess; "what is this?"



“ Me, my Lord,” said Mrs. Simmons, turning as pale as death at the Marquess’s question, put with all the vehemence of anger.

“ What is it you say ?” said Lord Snowdon.

“ Hall has sent up word, my Lord, that Mr. Burford is in the library,” replied she.

“ Burford ! What, the tutor ?” asked the Marquess

“ Yes, my Lord, from France, I believe he said,” answered the wretched hair curler.

“ Say I am coming.”

“ For this relief much thanks,” thought Mrs. Simmons, who lost no time in absconding, and sending down the answer by the footman, who had brought the message up stairs.

“ I am in despair,” said Lord Snowdon ; “ there is more in this affair than I yet know—but I will unravel it. I love you dearer than my life ; but if I find that you have been playing a game with me—deceiving me—tricking me—laughing at me—there is no power that shall prevent me from casting you off, and thrusting you from me, loaded with my bitterest curses. It is not, Lady



Hester, for your own disgrace I shall punish you; it is for the disgrace you must bring upon your family. Recollect what you owe to your station! Remember your ancestors, and do not hope that the annals of our house, pure, honourable, and noble as they are, shall be stained in my life-time, by the daughter of my love. No—deceit and treachery I abhor. I yet must hope you innocent—but if that hope is fallacious—not even the desire I feel of seeing happiness in my family, will hinder me from distinctly marking to the world, my view of the degradation you have entailed upon your name.”

Saying which, his Lordship quitted the room, as nearly mad as any rational creature well could be, who had no grounds whatever for believing, that which was in fact really true. Lady Hester might have been in love with a duke or a dancing-master, a marquess or a mountebank; he could not tell who might be the object of her affections, even supposing they *were* pre-engaged,—but the thing was fixed. He convinced himself first, that she was attached to somebody; and



then, from her backwardness to confess the fact, he flew to the conclusion, that the object of her affection was somebody so much beneath herself, as to make her certain that the mention of his name would incur his most violent denunciation.

That he was right, unfortunately right, poor Lady Hester and Miss Everingham felt; and their miseries and agonies were not in a little degree heightened, first, by his Lordship's extreme hypothesis concerning the ultra disgrace of his daughter's marrying Burford, and secondly, by the extraordinarily opportune—or rather inopportune—mention of his name in the way of announcement by the trembling Simmons.

“Only conceive,” said Lady Hester, “Mr. Burford is here! he brings news, no doubt, from Malvern. Will he stay? in all probability he will dine here, Anne. You will see him—inquire, inquire every thing about my brother; to him, and him alone who loves me, must I look for aid and advice. I cannot expect my father to delay his marriage, nor does he intend it. It is I who have broken the engagement into which he



entered, not to bring home a new wife to my mother's house till I was gone."

"If Mr. Burford dines here," said Miss Everingham, "I will manage"——

"Take care, take care, my dear Anne," said Lady Hester, "be cautious lest my father should suspect—and, oh! to what a wretched state am I reduced, to wish to elude his vigilance. I am guilty, guilty, guilty! and yet this carefulness is not for myself; it would bring ruin upon Mr. Burford. My father has been beyond measure kind to him—the thought—what we have heard just now decides that—the idea that I—oh! Anne, I must not trust myself to think."

"Be at rest, dear Lady Hester," said Miss Everingham, "all will go well. You heard your father say that he is to quit this country for some years after his marriage. Rely upon it, he is appointed ambassador at some foreign court. You will be left under the care of Lady Ospringe. No offer will be forced upon you. Lady Ospringe will be a powerful friend in time



of need; she is your own aunt, the sister of your excellent mother. If Lord Snowdon continues in that determination, nothing more advantageous to your peace of mind could happen."

"Ah!" said Lady Hester, "I believe that I could find no better or more agreeable home than my aunt's; but my life is destined to be a blank to me. I have sinned, and deserve to be punished—repentance is the lot marked out for me."

The conversation was here interrupted by the entrance of Simmons, who was the bearer of a letter from Lord Malvern to his sister. The address was a convincing proof that the intelligence of the overthrow of the marriage had not reached him—it was directed to the Countess of Elmsdale. The expression of Mrs. Simmon's countenance when she delivered the packet, formed a striking and agreeable contrast to the tear-bedewed faces of the ladies.

Burford's arrival was to himself most inopportune. He had so timed his visit to his patron, that he should arrive the day after the wedding, when the bride should have left the house, and



all the outward signs of nuptial gaiety have been removed. He, with his mother, and sister, reached town from Dover about half past five ; and without stopping, even to change his dress, anxious, if possible, to leave London the next morning for Silgrove, hurried up to Grosvenor-square, and found himself *tête-à-tête* with the Marquess, doomed to hear all the details of the misadventures of the preceding day, and to listen to the heart-rending intelligence, that Lady Hester was seriously ill, still unmarried, and under the same roof with himself.

That he must dine with the Marquess he found inevitable ; he had no possible excuse to offer for declining his invitation, or, as his Lordship felt, "command." He accordingly "obtained leave" to return to the hotel at which he had deposited his mother and sister ; and having apprized them of the extraordinary event which had occurred, and made himself fit to appear in Grosvenor-square, returned to the mansion of the Marquess.

Although we have safely landed the Burfords



in London, the reader may, perhaps, not be displeased to know in what manner the progress of the party was continued after their arrival at Beauvais, where we left them quietly established on the first night after their departure from Paris.

In the morning there did not appear any very strong disposition on the part of any of the travellers to hurry their preparations for departure; it seemed—and it is a feeling that must have occurred at one time or another of every man's life, and woman's too—as if they were all perfectly happy and contented where they were, but, that at the same time, it was all too pleasant not to be a little wrong. Burford was pleased to see his kind friend in such good spirits, considering<sup>d</sup> all that had so recently occurred, and Mrs. Burford was pleased because her son was pleased; that Maria was pleased, she took no great pains to conceal, for in truth it was the happiest week of her life, and the young Lord was pleased because he saw every body else was pleased.

Still there hung over them all, a sort of reserve



—a kind of restraint, unaccountable as it was natural. Lord Malvern selected Maria for his companion, and as she leant upon his arm, and listened to his agreeable conversation, she felt a regret, which she could yet scarcely characterize, to think that in two days more they were to part—and part for ever. The quiet, domesticated Lord Malvern, of Beauvais, attending with reverence to the history of Jeanne Hachette, related to the party by a woman who looked old enough to have been her contemporary, and then sauntering about into the manufactories, and cheapening tapestries, and bargaining for silks merely to make conversation, was a different being to Lord Malvern, in his proper sphere of action, where amongst his peers and contemporaries, his society would be courted, his goodness flattered, and his greatness deferred to. The arm on which she leant was destined for the noblest and the fairest of her sex; the hand that kindly pressed her's when they met or parted, would be sought by the mighty and designing; and all this passed through her gentle mind, and produced no feel-



ing, save one—it was a womanly feeling:—she felt no regret that she could not always share the fate and fortunes of Lord Malvern; all she lamented was, that he with whom she could have been so happy was so much her superior.

This sentiment, moderated as it was by delicacy of feeling, dignity of character, purity of heart, and piety of mind, was more, infinitely more dangerous to Maria's happiness, than she at the moment fancied. The attentions which Lord Malvern paid her were marked, and now characterized by a constant deference to her opinion, and a frequent appeal to her taste and judgment. Her mother watched her during these "three glorious days," as Malvern thought them, with the tenderest anxiety. Still, what could she do—how act? She could not, like an ill-bred boor, call her child away from the society of their best and warmest friend: she could not force herself upon Lord Malvern's attention, or seize his arm to exclude her child. The excellent parent had been over cautious, and, as will happen sometimes, had been caught in her own



trap. The young Lord delighted in Maria's society; and, although he did not go the length of suspecting that she was hurried away from Paris to secure her from his advances, he resolved, by assuming the arrangement of the journey, to keep her near him to the latest possible moment.

At Beauvais they attended Mass in the cathedral—that was unlucky. To hearts that sympathize, full of undeclared and untold love, nothing is more congenial than the solemn strains of church music: the swelling organ, the uplifted voice, the holy feeling which the sacred place itself inspires, excite in minds, disposed as those of Malvern and Maria were at the moment, a combination of feelings, more powerful than words can express. As the chaunt of the priests and choristers reverberated amidst the traceries of the roof, Maria felt a chilly coldness run through her limbs, succeeded by a glowing flush which suffused her cheeks, and when the elevated Host was presented to the prostrate people, she lost the recollection of every thing



around her, and bursting into tears, leant for support upon her kind companion.

Brighter in *his* eyes than diamonds, were those tears of genuine sensibility ; dearer to him, that artless burst of feeling than all the studied phrases of society, and all the cant of morbid sentimentality.

After this incident, the manner of Lord Malvern to Maria was evidently changed. He could no longer talk fluently upon indifferent subjects ; he no longer seemed to take an interest in passing objects ; he walked silently and slowly homewards, the conversation being confined to his inquiries how she felt, and her answers—which, it must be confessed, partook, in a great degree, of the character of the questions.

They left Beauvais soon after noon ; but not until Maria was perfectly recovered. Restoratives were assiduously administered by the attentive nobleman ; and his anxiety in watching the effect they produced upon the young lady's headache, was infinitely greater than any he had expressed upon any other subject, since his sister's



letter had cured him of all solicitude about his once-loved heartless Elizabeth—or, as he was wont in other days to call her—his Eliza.

The weather was fine and favourable; but Burford soon perceived—for Lord Malvern kept his schemes entirely to himself—that they were destined to pass another night upon the road. Nobody could complain; but it was not until the beginning of this day's journey, that Maria herself felt nervous and uneasy in any serious degree: she sat opposite to Lord Malvern in the carriage, and was sure by his altered manner that she must have done something to effect the sudden change she observed; the frank openness of his conduct had given place to a gentle, yet more solicitous, care about her, wholly different in its character, and particularly painful to her, because it seemed that he was devoting a care and attention to her of which she ought not to be the object. The moment this feeling was excited, it was clear that all Mrs. Burford's precautions had been useless.

The journey proceeded much as usual. On



the road from Beauvais to Abbeville, where his Lordship proposed to halt for the night, there is nothing worthy of remark : a wide open country, almost undotted by houses and unenlivened by villages, is all that greets the eye ; it seems marvellous how the corn which covers the vast space on every side is sown or reaped, human beings appear so scarce ; in fact, Picardy is extremely well described by the riddle of a map, in which there are rivers without water, towns without streets, and houses without inhabitants.

After a tiresome *trajet*, the party, less happy and more uneasy than they had yet felt themselves, reached Abbeville, where Lord Malvern's courier had prepared every thing for their reception. After dinner, Maria complained of headache, and retired for the evening ; the conversation was flat ; the day of Lady Hester's marriage was fast approaching ; in forty-eight hours she would have become the wife of Lord Elmsdale. This depressed Burford ; his depression lowered the spirits of his mother, who was the more anxious about his evident unhappiness from her



ignorance of its real cause ; and Lord Malvern was more dull than either of them, because Maria, who was the unhappiest of the party, had left them.

To be sure the next day might bring something brighter, and, at all events, there was another church—and a very fine one too—to visit at Abbeville.

The morning came, and with it a promenade, but the ease and frankness of the previous day were wanting. Whenever Lord Malvern appealed to Maria upon any subject, she referred to her mother, who, with Burford, was walking behind them. She seemed conscious of the difficulty of her situation ; and what, four-and-twenty hours before, was an apprehension that she was too happy, had become a certainty that in four-and-twenty hours more she should be miserable.

At Abbeville they visited the cathedral, admired the colossal statues of its façade, and its Gothic towers, (luckily they were not there during the hours of service,) and having peram-



bulated its streets, returned to the inn and resumed their journey.

They reached Calais on the eve of Lady Hester's marriage, and they also appeared to have reached the *acme* of melancholy. Lord Malvern and Burford were engaged in long and thoughtful conversations, and Maria's depression was unmitigated by any liveliness on the part of her mother.

It was in the afternoon of the wedding day that the Burfords took leave of the Continent and Lord Malvern; his Lordship having charged Burford with the communication to his father, which he felt had better be made verbally, as the opportunity offered, than by letter, respecting his readiness to accommodate himself to his wishes as regarded the settlements, announcing that he should stay at Calais until the return of Burford, in readiness to receive his father's solicitor, and execute any necessary "act and deed" for the arrangement of the affair.

The parting of the party was painful in the



extreme. Lord Malvern offered his arm to Maria; she looked as though she ought to give precedence to her mother. This ceremonious feeling was new and artificial, and very suspicious. His Lordship overruled her scruples and walked along the pier.

Neither spoke. At length, Lord Malvern, in a subdued tone, and evidently struggling with strong feeling, said—

“Shall you remain entirely in England?”

“I believe so,” replied Maria, with an air of affected gaiety and indifference, and knowing nothing of her fate or her mother’s intentions.

“Where—at Silgrove?” said Lord Malvern.

“That must depend upon Charles’s hospitality,” replied the young lady.

“I shall hear of you from *him*,” said Lord Malvern. “Do you correspond with him?”

“Not very regularly,” said Maria.

“I wish you would,” said his Lordship.

Maria did not answer.

“It will be my greatest pleasure in my self-



imposed exile to hear of *you*, Maria," said Lord Malvern.

"My mother is beckoning me," said Maria ;  
"we are going wrong, Lord Malvern."

"Are we?" said his Lordship.

"I am sure we are," said Maria—and she thought so too.

"Why go at all?" added he; his throat seemed parched—his hands were cold. Why had he delayed declaring his feelings?—it was now too late—yet he would have given the world to speak; all he *could* say was—"Maria, I believe I am mad."

This was spoken in an under tone, and Maria did not hear it—that is, she would not. What a situation for such a couple to be placed in! Look at all the connexions and intricacies, all the "wheels within wheels," which were at work in the world; consider the confusions and irritations, and all the evils which must evidently result from any serious termination of such an affair, and then do justice to the solicitude and anxiety of Mrs. Burford, in using every practi-



cable means to prevent what, had she been as mean and mercenary as Lady Katharine Oldham, it would have been her most anxious desire to secure and conclude.

Burford was completely broken down. He could not but recollect that the day of parting from his friend was the day on which all that he held dear in the world was to be taken from him eternally; and Malvern, when he fervently pressed Maria's hand, felt angry with himself that he had suffered any feeling connected with any other subject, to have kept him from accompanying them. His leave-taking of Mrs. Burford was full of that grateful consideration which a noble heart can feel for disinterested kindness. The word was given, and the steamer went her way, and Malvern watched her, marked as she was by "her pendant of smoke," till the distance and the darkness of evening hid her from his sight. He returned to Quillacq's, to pass the first of a series of very agreeable evenings.

This is the brief history of the journey and voyage; and Burford having devoted the time



which has been occupied in the narrative of their career to Calais, to making himself "amiable," finished his operations exactly in time for us to find him at dinner at Lord Snowdon's in Grosvenor-square.

The dinner was dull enough. Before Miss Everingham, the Marquess did not choose to exhibit any symptoms of interest about his son, although in his earlier interview, Burford had explained Lord Malvern's readiness and anxiety to meet his wishes, and convinced the Marquess that he had no feeling with regard to his marriage which might not be overcome; not daring, however, to enlighten his Lordship as to the original cause of his absolute detestation of it.

Miss Everingham, finding that Lord Snowdon kept the conversation upon every topic except the one to which she was most anxious to lead it, very soon retired, and left the Marquess and the Rector of Silgrove *tête-à-tête*.

"Burford," said his Lordship, "I have been a good deal puzzled, and a good deal surprised to-day, at a circumstance to which I at first paid



very little attention, but which at present strikes me as important, and upon which you, from your intimacy with Malvern, and his unlimited confidence in you, perhaps can enlighten me. Lady Hester's fainting in church, which I have detailed to you, I attributed to some physical cause, however indisposed to such weaknesses our family may be; but Lord Elmsdale—you see I talk to you as confidentially as Malvern does—Lord Elmsdale imagined it to proceed from some personal dislike to himself, and thence concluded that she had formed some other and earlier attachment.”

“ Yes, Sir,” said Burford, just able to speak.

“ Of this I thought nothing, because I know the deference she pays to my opinions, the readiness she has always evinced to follow my suggestions; and indeed because I know, above all, that it had so happened, that no persons for whom she could possibly entertain any regard of that nature, have been about the house, except merely as casual visitors, and therefore I scouted the idea altogether; but this afternoon I had been down



to Downing-street twice, and when I came in, I had a conversation with her, in which, to my surprise, I found, for the first time in my life, her answers to my questions on that particular point were evasive and by no means satisfactory."

"Indeed !" said Burford.

"Now, what I was going to ask," said Lord Snowdon, "is, that as Malvern and his sister have always been perfect friends, and almost constant companions, whether you—I don't desire any breach of confidence—of course not—it is not in my nature to do it—but, I mean, did you, in the course of ordinary conversation, ever hear Malvern say any thing which could lead you to believe that she had formed any sort of attachment for anybody?"

"No, my Lord," said Burford, "I certainly never heard—I—Lord Malvern has expressed an opinion to me, that her Ladyship could not, as he imagined, knowing her taste and disposition, admire Lord Elmsdale."

"Lord Elmsdale !" said the Marquess, "my dear Burford, Lord Elmsdale is an ass—a perfect



simpleton. I don't talk of him—he is gone. If he had belonged to us, I should, of course, as the best possible policy, have upheld him, and put him forward, but he is gone. I don't know such a person—I am speaking of any former attachment."

"I never heard Lord Malvern mention anything of the sort," said Burford.

"Well, now, I'll tell you what you must do for me," said the Marquess; "whether you go down to Silgrove to-morrow or the next day cannot make much difference—stay in town till Thursday; do me the kindness to bring Mrs. Burford and your sister to dinner here to-morrow, and we'll get them a box at some play—it will amuse them; and come early. I know that Lady Hester has a very high opinion of *you*, independently of the feeling she naturally entertains towards so great a favourite of her brother. There is something like awe in the character of a father; and although no man has less to frighten any body, about him, than myself, I can easily conceive, upon such a point, that sort of diffi-



dence which is generated by apprehension. Now really I have no object in the world but to ascertain the fact. If it should be so, and the man is a gentleman, and of talent and accomplishments, and of that sort of fortune which is consistent with her prospects, I declare I care not the least whether he is titled or untitled, or what his politics, or any thing of that sort. Now, having that feeling, I think that you—if you will do me the favour—might in an interview to-morrow—they tell me she will be in her *boudoir*—visible to friends—might talk to her—and in the course of conversation discover whether Lord Elmsdale's suspicions are correct; for I ought to tell you, that our cousin Anne seems to indulge in the same fancy.”

“ I fear, my Lord,” said Burford, “ that I must go to Silgrove to-morrow, or”—

“ Really—” said the Marquess, “ I almost wish that I had given Silgrove to somebody else, if its possession is to rob me of your society, and deprive me of your services in so justifiable a cause.”



“ My Lord,” said Burford, “ forgive me”—

“ Forgive !” said Lord Snowdon, “ my dear Mr. Burford, there is nothing to forgive. I have no claim upon you ; so far from it, I consider that you have a claim on me for much more than I can ever bestow, for the great and essential services you have rendered Malvern : indeed, to speak the truth, I attribute the change in his opinions upon the subject of my marriage entirely to your kindness.”

“ No, Lord Snowdon,” said Burford, “ you wrong your son : from his own heart sprung the right and proper feeling, which I have been happy enough to communicate. The sudden surprise, acting upon a warm and sensitive mind, caused the letter, of which your Lordship perhaps reasonably complains.”

“ But, Mr. Burford,” said the Marquess, “ the objections are the same—the same lady is the object—the same events will be the result.”

“ True, my Lord,” said Burford; “ but—I—of course, as I told Lord Malvern, on points of feeling, I felt I had no right to interfere. He



wrote hastily, perhaps wrongly, in the first instance; but, subsequently”—

“Upon your counsel,” said the Marquess, “he amended his conduct—I know it. I only wish I had a deanery for you; and then, perhaps, I might induce you to assist me in finding out the alleged *penchant* of Lady Hester.”

There sealed his fate with Burford, the most noble the Marquess of Snowdon. That he believed the living of Silgrove would purchase his dependent's influence with his son in favour of his marriage, we know; that it had done so, he fancied; and he suffered his belief upon that point to escape him. This Burford manfully repelled; but when his Lordship followed up the blow by the supposition that an increased promotion would produce a decreased independence; and seeing Mr. Burford—little knowing the cause—shrink from the interference with Lady Hester, suggested a deanery as enough to make him quite subservient to his patron's views, he effectually fired the train.

To ask Burford to extort a confession from his



daughter, which confession would make her his own, was something, and not a little ; and Burford was prepared to resign all his offices connected with the Snowdon patronage, rather than attempt a duty which he could not, in the common course of nature, fulfil. The last insolent observation of the proud man terminated all his doubts as to the course he should pursue.

It grew late ; the conversation flagged ; Burford prepared to go ; the Marquess repeated his invitation to his mother and sister, and urged his calling at "about twelve." To all these propositions, Charles returned civil but inconclusive answers. He certainly had not anticipated the occurrences of the day ; and, least of all did he imagine, that he should have been called upon to perform a duty even more tremendous to him than that which he had so studiously and skilfully avoided. He took his leave, and promised that the Marquess should either see or hear from him before noon.

The Marquess shook him by both hands, congratulated him on his good looks, went forth even



from the door of the dining-room (for they had not gone up-stairs) three feet into the hall, inquired the state of the weather, and did all the little good-naturisms of a third-rate twaddler, in order to please his chaplain, and, above all, to give the "*tone*" to the establishment.

Burford hurried to his hotel; the Marquess stalked to his bed-room; and as he passed through the passages which led to it, with all the dignity of a Governor-general, he might have been seen rubbing, with the palm of his hand, the place on his coat which was so soon to be occupied by the promised star of the illustrious order of the Garter!



## CHAPTER XII.

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IN the morning, Lord Snowdon arose full of the anticipation of seeing his dear Elizabeth. He proposed, after Burford's interview with Lady Hester, and after he had possessed himself of the secrets of the confessional, to proceed to Richmond, where he intended to dine and stay the night; his Lordship having, since the conclusion of his engagement with Miss Oldham, caused rooms to be secured for him at the Star and Garter, where he slept and breakfasted, upon the occasions of his not returning to town in the evening.

On his breakfast-table his Lordship found several letters, amongst which, the first that



caught his eye was one from the Premier ; it was brief—these were its contents :—

“ *Downing-street* — ——

“ MY DEAR MARQUESS,

“ I am going to Windsor to-day. I am in great hopes of being able to carry our point : you must not, however, be too sanguine. I hear that a *personal promise* from head-quarters stands in our way—under the circumstances, I think this may be got over. The King comes to town to-morrow, and you shall hear the moment I get free.

“ Your’s, faithfully.”

This did not exactly please him. He felt assured that if he had had to deal with a Whig ministry, personal promises, or personal wishes, would very soon be got rid of, not by being overcome, but by not being attended to ; but as it was, he apprehended that the minister might concede to his master, and that he should lose his object, almost the dearest object of his life,



and which he had, as he considered, actually been promised. As for the idea of making an extra knight of that select and illustrious order to which he aspired, the idea never suggested itself.

The next letter his Lordship opened was from Burford—the reader must have a perusal of it.

“ ——— *Hotel.*

“ MY LORD,

“ It is with considerable difficulty, and under feelings of a most painful nature, that I address your Lordship on the subject of a conversation which I had the honour of holding with your Lordship last night.

“ It will be unnecessary for me to enter at length into the reasons which suggest themselves to my mind, in opposition to your Lordship's wish, that I should become the medium through which your Lordship might ascertain the real state of Lady Hester's feelings upon subjects of the most delicate nature, into the discussion of



which, as I last night stated, I consider myself neither officially nor personally justified in entering with her Ladyship.

“ I trust that my conduct for the many years through which I have had the honour of being connected with your Lordship’s family, will be a sufficient evidence of my anxiety to do my duty rigidly and faithfully ; indeed the very flattering manner in which your Lordship has been pleased to evince your sense of my humble yet zealous services, is a sufficient testimonial of the good opinion I have constantly laboured to secure and maintain. It is with this conviction, that I have to entreat that your Lordship will not attribute my positive refusal to converse with Lady Hester upon the topics to which your Lordship last night referred, to any indisposition to attend to your Lordship’s wishes whenever my duty may be justly required, but to a consciousness on my part, of unfitness for the task which your Lordship would assign me, and of the impropriety of which I should be guilty in assuming a character in your Lordship’s family



which it forms no part of my functions to maintain.

“ It is, however, impossible, particularly after an observation made by your Lordship last night, that I should not be fully sensible of the favours with which your Lordship has been pleased to honour me, nor can I, with that consciousness upon my mind, believe that I ought to continue to enjoy the benefits you have conferred upon me, entertaining, as I do, an opinion so widely different from that of your Lordship, upon the character of the obligations which those favours impose. I, therefore, most respectfully and thankfully, beg leave to resign into your Lordship’s hands the presentation to the living of Silgrove; and I have by this post written to Lord Malvern, to announce to him that my character of tutor to his Lordship terminates with this day.

“ It is, I assure your Lordship, not without the greatest pain, that I have come to this decision. I part from Lord Malvern with a regret founded upon the warmest esteem and affection



for the qualities of his head and heart; convinced, that his later life will fully justify the expectations which his early career has naturally excited. I trust, that in what I have offered in justification of the conduct I have felt it due to my character to adopt, I shall not have had the misfortune to offend your Lordship, than which, I beg to assure you, nothing is farther from my thoughts or wishes.

“ I have the honour to be,

“ My Lord,

“ Your Lordship’s faithful servant,

“ CHARLES BURFORD.”

“ *The Marquess of Snowdon,*

&c. &c. &c.”

“ Capital !” said his Lordship, as he began to re-read the letter by the aid of a pocket pair of spectacles, which he always used when alone, and for the quiet enjoyment of which he invariably breakfasted in his own room, except when he had visitors in the house ; and for which reason, he also always breakfasted at the inn,



when on his Philandering excursions to Richmond —“Capital ! this is, indeed, the march of intellect, or of impudence ! The schoolmaster is abroad now, or the deuce is in it ! Resign a living and a tutorship, because his patron asks him to have half an hour’s serious conversation with his daughter—impertinent upstart !”

Saying which, his Lordship indignantly threw the letter on the table, and then began to think that the “impertinent upstart,” had the best of the discussion. The living, however, might be of use in forwarding his public views ; it was not much for a minister, but he would, at all events, put it at his disposal immediately upon his return from Windsor ;—but, then, what was he to do about his son ? Malvern would be left alone, and a thousand to one would form some unfortunate connexion ; and, perhaps, disgrace his house, and lose the heiress that was bringing up for him, by a marriage beneath himself.

It was extremely embarrassing. He had declined coming over ; yet clearly, as the Marquess believed, under Burford’s influence, had



behaved most handsomely in worldly matters. He was at Calais—the solicitor was to meet him there—and he was to go to him the third day from the present one. That arrangement had been made under the idea that Lord Malvern was at Paris. Lord Snowdon resolved on making his *homme d'affaires* the negociator of a peace between them, and instruct him, if possible, to induce his Lordship to come back with him; a course he was led to adopt, by having discovered, from Burford's conversation, that the asperity of his feelings with respect to the marriage, was considerably moderated.

All these things, however, were to be put by for the day. All were secondary to the duties of the lover, which the Noble Marquess was that morning going to pay. He for a moment doubted whether in his visit to Lady Hester before his departure, he should mention Burford's letter and resignation; but he speedily decided to say nothing about it, and the reason for his silence was a cogent one. If he mentioned the resignation, he must naturally mention the cir-



cumstances which had led to it; and hence his daughter would discover the design he had of ensnaring her into a confession of her prepossession in favour of somebody, by the instrumentality of the man whom he thought he had bribed sufficiently to induce him to commit a meanness, and undertake a commission which, even if it had not been wholly out of the question as he was personally situated, would have been wholly unworthy of the character he had hitherto supported, or the profession which he had adopted.

His Lordship's visit to Lady Hester was brief, cold, and uninteresting. She was in her *boudoir*, looking ill and unhappy;—indeed the strange notoriety in which the circumstance of the incomplete marriage had involved her, and the consciousness she felt of being obnoxious to public remark and observation, had a serious effect upon her mind, while the knowledge that Charles Burford and her father had been closeted for nearly five hours the preceding day and evening, kept her, during her stay in her room, in a constant flutter lest he should begin to speak



of him, or quote his opinion, or perhaps announce a visit from him in the course of the morning, than which nothing could have been more natural. But, no—her nervousness was uncalled for; the Marquess never mentioned him—never alluded to him—nor did a syllable escape him with reference to anything connected with him, except inquiring of Lady Hester, what Lord Malvern had said in his letter.

“There were not half a dozen lines in the note,” said Lady Hester; “he imagined I should have left town, and”——

Here her utterance was stopped by tears—the Marquess took her hand in his and pressed it.

“There, there, Hester dear,” said his Lordship, “do not worry yourself—never mind—I have no wish to know anything about the letter—be calm—I will leave you—talking is too much for you—I shall not return till to-morrow—let me find you better when I come back.”

His Lordship kissed her cheek, and making a cold and ceremonious bow to Miss Everingham, quitted the apartment.



To what a different scene did his Lordship forthwith transport himself ! In less than an hour he was in the billiard-room at Lady Katharine's villa, which, as he approached it, was ringing with mirth and laughter. Luncheon was just over, and Elizabeth Oldham and a Miss Macaw, a neighbour, were playing billiards, Frederick Richardson was marking, Lady Katharine and Mr. Losh, were playing battledore and shuttlecock in the hall, and Miss Camomile, the *ci-devant* governess, now on the half-pay of the family, was performing waltzes on the piano-forte in the drawing-room. Several little dogs were barking in different directions, and Lady Katharine, while she took her exercise, was talking in a tone of voice, louder and shriller than anything else, either vocal or instrumental in the house.

“ Why, how gay you are, Lady Katharine,” said the Marquess, standing amazed. In a momentary lull his Lordship's voice had been heard—down went the billiard maces—out of one of the windows hurried Frederick Richardson and



Miss Macaw—away went the shuttlecocks and battledores—off scampered Miss Cammomile, and in came Miss Oldham—looking beautiful. She ran to the Marquess with an air of affectionate playfulness, and his Lordship received her with a condescension at once gratifying and surprising.

“My dear Marquess,” said Lady Katharine, “we thought you were lost; poor Elizabeth has been crying her eyes out—as I tell her, she will cry herself blind. Upon my word, I do recollect a circumstance—it was in Hampshire—an old gentleman”——

“Come, Elizabeth,” said the Marquess, “let us take a stroll, I have a great deal to tell you, and a great deal to hear;” saying which, he led her out of the range of Lady Katharine’s fire, which, her Ladyship immediately turned upon Mr. Losh, who, devoted as he was only to her Ladyship’s “feeds,” as he elegantly called them, would gladly have spared her Ladyship the exertion which she volunteered.

Her Ladyship, however, felt it incumbent



upon her to pursue Lord Snowdon, in order to inquire after Lady Hester's health, and to condole with him upon the disappointment, which she had been prevented doing on the morning it occurred, by a more interesting engagement at the else deserted breakfast-table.

"Elizabeth," said the Marquess, when they were alone, "were you ever trusted with a state secret?"

"No, dear," said Miss Oldham. She always called him dear.

"Do you think you could keep one, if you were?"

"To be sure," said Miss Oldham, "try me."

"It is more important to *you* than many state secrets would be," said the Marquess, "for you are very intimately concerned with it."

"Indeed!" said Miss Oldham, "how I should be concerned in a state secret I cannot imagine."

"Of course you will remember that I am pledged to silence," said the Marquess, "and not even Lady Katharine must know what I am going to trust *you* with—I am appointed Governor-general of India."



“Of India!” said Elizabeth, her face lengthening instead of lighting up—“dear me!”

“Do you not rejoice?” said Lord Snowdon; “are you not aware of the splendour, the magnificence, the power, the authority, the dignity of the office, all of which are reflected upon the lady of the Governor-general?”

“Oh! it is very fine,” said Miss Oldham, “but then it is India after all; and consider what a distance Bengal is from Hyde Park Corner.”

“Yes, but, Elizabeth,” said the Marquess, disappointed in the highest or rather deepest degree, “there is a king in England, and no subject may lawfully expect to fill the throne; but in India, I shall be King—Emperor—and you, Elizabeth, will be my Queen.”

“That sounds very grand,” said Miss Oldham, “but I’m sure, when one looks at the people who come back from your future empire, and see their poor dear little yellow faces, and bald heads, and white lips, and black teeth, it is no great temptation to go.”

“Oh,” said the Marquess, “those people have



been living there for half centuries, and, as you say, come back dried up, living mummies; but our residence will not extend over five or six years, and I am determined to maintain the character with a magnificence yet unknown even in that magnificent country."

"But then there is the voyage, dear," said Elizabeth; "that horrid ship—we shall be, how long?"

"Four months, perhaps," said the Marquess, "but, we shall be together."

"Yes," said the lady, "that will be *very* agreeable; but—yes—dear me, only think, four months at sea. Is one sick all the time?"

"I trust not," said the Marquess. "However, Elizabeth, I have another bit of news for you—this, however, is not quite settled—I am to have the blue riband."

"Indeed!" said Miss Oldham; "why, dear, how smart you *will* look."

"It is not so much for effect," said Lord Snowdon, who lived and would have died for effect alone, "as it is for the honour of be-



longing to an institution so illustrious, that I value it."

"But I thought, dear," said Miss Oldham, whose pertness partook so much of *naïveté*, and whose manner of delivering impertinences with an air of naturalness, was so extremely puzzling as to leave the hearer in doubt whether she was the most impudent or the most innocent of her sex, "I thought you were in opposition to the government,—how comes it that they have given you these fine things?"

"Why, Elizabeth," said the Marquess, who felt himself more puzzled by the young lady than he had been for some time by any body, "I—that is—the circumstances of the country seem to me to have so far changed their appearance, that I considered it a matter of duty to tender my support to the government, and—"

"—— Oh!" said Elizabeth, bursting out into a loud laugh, "why then, dear, you are in fact what they call a rat!"

"No, my love," said the Marquess, "you are wrong there—you confound terms: I am glad of

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it—I hate a female politician ; but the word rat is never applied as you have just now applied it—if a Tory becomes a Whig, he is called a rat ; but, if a Whig has the good sense to become a Tory, he is never designated by that extremely coarse term.”

“All I know is,” said Miss Oldham, “that Lord ——”

“—— Never mind, my dear girl,” said the Marquess, “you need not illustrate your position by examples; all I wish you to believe is, that I have been actuated in my change of sentiments by nothing but a desire to do my duty to the country.”

“You are a dear good creature,” said Miss Oldham.

“I am afraid,” said Lord Snowdon, “that this elevation to Vice-royalty—for we must *call* it nothing more—will turn your little head.”

“Oh, no,” said Miss Oldham ; “I would much rather you had stuck to your old politics, and we had remained at Old Lionsden.”

“I see,” said the Marquess, “it is the voyage





that alarms you ; but remember, we shall have a man of war to convey us,—I am promised the Royal Tiger, an eighty gun line-of-battle ship, so that we shall have plenty of suitable accommodation. And then consider the patronage,—secretaryships, and aids-du-campships, and all sorts of things ; and I shall have my chamberlain, and my master of the horse, and my steward, and my comptroller of the household, all with white staves, and a household uniform ; and then my body-guard, besides havildars, and subadars, and jemidars, and kitmagars, and half a hundred other officers, all in attendance upon the—Marchioness—Elizabeth !”

Saying which, his Lordship tenderly pressed her delicate hand, and snatched a kiss from her rosy lips.

“ Who are going to be your aids-du-camp, dear ?” said Miss Oldham.

“ Why,” said the Marquess, “ I have not made any certain arrangements ; indeed, I am pledged to take one or two gentlemen upon Downing-street recommendations.”

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"I should think it would be a good thing for Frederick Richardson, dear," said Miss Oldham; "he has no fortune, and he is remarkably clever and agreeable,—he would be quite an acquisition out there."

"We'll see about it," said the Marquess; "he never occurred to me. Perhaps he would not like to quit his regiment?"

"Oh, I am sure he'd go, and be delighted," said Miss Oldham; "shall I ask him?"

"My dear girl," said his Lordship, "have not I told you that the whole affair is at present a secret, a state secret?"

"I'm sure you may trust *him*," said Miss Oldham, "he is the least likely person in the world to tell any thing."

"We must not try him yet," said Lord Snowdon; "but I will not forget him: your wishes, Elizabeth, are commands."

"What an important personage I am," said Elizabeth, "to command the great Governor-general of all the Indians."

"You are a dear good girl," said the Mar-

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guess, repeating the little affectionate playfulness which we before noticed.

It would have been quite impossible, had there unluckily been any witnesses to this scene in Richmond's bowers, not to have recalled some pathetic lines which occur in a facetious song, once rendered extremely popular by the talent of Mathews, which contains the lamentations of Samson for the loss of his hair, while looking at, and listening to, the proudest peer of the realm, in the hands and under the controul of our modern Delilah: her triumph, however, was as yet but half complete.

At dinner the Marquess was all smiles and amiability; Lady Katharine as voluble as ever; Miss Macaw, seated between Mr. Richardson and his friend Losh, seemed to occupy Frederick; while the Governor-general was devoting himself to Elizabeth, and Mr. Losh was behaving with great civility to Miss Cammomile, who dined at table, and would have given one of her old eyes to have been any where else.

Things were going on very smoothly—so





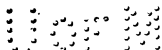
smoothly, that they are hardly worth recording—until, about the middle of dinner, Frederick Richardson, the pet of the family, called out in a distinct and audible voice—

“Lord Snowdon—a glass of wine?”

Lord Snowdon returned no answer,—the question was repeated.

“When the Marquess of Snowdon,” said his Lordship, “wishes to drink wine with Cornet Richardson, he will let him know it.”

Here broke out the Burrah Saab Bahauder—here came the pat of the lion which poor Lady Hester had so long anticipated. Mr. Richardson felt a momentary doubt what he should do, which of two courses to pursue—whether he should laugh it off, or take the missile nearest his hand, and having flung it at his Lordship’s head, quit the house and wait the consequences: the latter seemed the most natural and justifiable line to adopt; but as Cornet Richardson had been told by Miss Elizabeth Oldham, half an hour before dinner, the whole of the history of the Marquess’s appointment as Governor-gene-





ral, and her own scheme of making him one of the aids-du-camp, he resolved to take the pacific tone, in order not to quarrel with his Excellency, but, on the contrary, to give him an idea of his passive qualifications for the situation in his household which he intended to fill.

The explosion threw an additional damp upon the party; but Lady Katharine was unquenchable, and the flow of her conversation continued in one unimpeded course.

In the evening, Lady Katharine, her daughter, and the Marquess, seated themselves on a sofa in the drawing-room, while the Cornet and his friend, and Miss Macaw, chaperoned by Miss Cammomile, retired to the billiard-room "out of the way" of the Illustrious, who was evidently in a bad humour.

His Lordship having communicated the history of his accession to office to his intended, felt it right to admit her mother into their confidence, convinced that the infirmity of human nature would not suffer the daughter to conceal so important an event from her parent. Lady

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Katharine, who had but a very faint and confused idea of oriental geography, expressed a hope that there was no danger of yellow fever, and recounted several histories, none of which, of course, in the slightest degree related to the subject, and ended by an allusion to Mr. Burford the tutor, as she always called him.

"Mr. Burford," said the Marquess, "was in town yesterday and dined with me."

"Did Lady Hester see him?" said Miss Oldham.

"No," replied Lord Snowdon, "she did not; but why do you ask?"

"Oh, nothing, dear," said the young lady.

"It is a curious enough question," said the Marquess, "for I have parted with Mr. Burford finally, because he refused to see her."

"Parted!" said Lady Katharine, "how?"

"He has resigned the living which I gave him," said his Lordship, "and has ceased to be my son's tutor."

"Dear me," said Lady Katharine, "how sudden! and for what did you say?"



"I wished him," said Lord Snowdon, "to see Hester; she has a high opinion of him, and a respect derived from the affection which her brother bears him; and I thought, perhaps, I might ascertain the real current of her feelings, and whether she has formed any attachment which, in point of fact, caused the separation between us and Lord Elmsdale."

"And Mr. Burford would not undertake the task?" said Miss Oldham.

"No: he declined it," said the Marquess.

"I think I could guess why," said Elizabeth.

"And so could I," said Lady Katharine.

"He puts it upon a general feeling of his not being justified," said Lord Snowdon; "he writes in a very high strain, and, I think, rather mistakes his position."

"He may put it upon what he pleases," said Elizabeth, "but I know what I know—only, we never tell tales out of school—do we, Mamma?"

"No," said Lady Katharine. "I remember once—I was brought up at a great school—and Mr. Oglander, whose daughter"—



“My dear Lady Katharine,” interrupted the Marquess, “I beg you a thousand pardons, but what is the circumstance connected with Mr. Burford that”——

“You tell, Mamma,” said Elizabeth.

“Oh, I don’t know that there is much to tell,” said Lady Katharine; “I remember noticing—particularly, Elizabeth—don’t you recollect?—it was the day after we had been to the Fancy ball at Horseden—by the way, that reminds me of what I heard yesterday from Cheltenham, where the Limpetts have been staying—old Mr. Limpett is the man who”——

“But, Lady Katharine—Mr. Burford?” said the Marquess.

“Oh, I’ll tell you, dear,” said Elizabeth; “Mamma has such a roundabout way of telling things: all we know—at least, all I know—is, that when I used to be so much with Hester, and Lord Malvern and Mr. Burford were going about with us, I used to notice how fond Hester seemed of him; and I remember saying to



Mamma that I thought some day we should hear of Hester's running away with him—that's all."

"All!" said the Marquess, "all!—do you call it all? It is indeed all—for what more could be wanting to drive me mad? How blind, how foolishly blind, I must have been! Now I see the whole thing—now it opens upon me at once. Burford persuaded Malvern to stay away from the marriage because I proposed to him to perform the ceremony. Now I can account for the girl's agitation when his name was mentioned; now I can understand the affectionate intercourse between him and my son. Fool that I was! I had actually begun a letter insisting upon the impertinent coxcomb's retaining the living—humbling myself to the viper whom I have cherished to sting me in the tenderest part."

"Dear me, Lord Snowdon," said Lady Katharine, "I wish we had not mentioned it; for, after all, as I remember saying to old Mrs. Dando, when we were playing Whist at the



Dowager Lady Slyman's—who, by the way, has sold her cottage in Sussex to Captain Smithson, the man who is going to be married to a niece of Lord Bamford's, by his second wife—for *my* part, I never say any thing"——

"Madam," said the Marquess, "you have said enough to drive me mad !—But why, Elizabeth, why did not you—you, who situated as we are, ought to have no secrets from me—why did you not put me on my guard?"

"Why should I, dear?" said Miss Oldham; "I saw Lady Hester was going to be married to Lord Elmsdale—I concluded she had forgotten all about the tutor; and as I found her seemingly well pleased with the new match, I made a point of never alluding, in the slightest degree, to any thing that had occurred during the period of our greatest intimacy, when Mamma and I were staying at Lionsden."

"True, dear, true," said the Marquess; "what should you judge from but appearances ?—and she never mentioned the man's name to you?"



"Never, in the remotest degree, alluded to him," said Elizabeth.

"It is strange, too, how she could have avoided it," said the Marquess, "for I suppose she spoke constantly of her brother."

"Why," said Miss Oldham, colouring crimson—for she had not yet quite overcome the amiable weakness of blushing,—“no—she did not talk much of him to *me*.”

"That is singular," said Lord Snowdon, "and convinces me that her avoidance of the subject was a matter of design; she felt she was treading upon tender ground."

"I dare say she did," said Miss Oldham.

"However, Lord Snowdon," said Lady Katharine, "you must not fancy that we have any very strong grounds for this belief—I always think of what Mrs. Crawford used to say—she afterwards married Sir Simon Spoonbill, the methodistical baronet, who was thrown out of his phaeton, near Croydon, close by Purley, where Horne Tooke wrote his book. By the way, Horne Tooke——"



“—Has been in Heaven these twenty years,” said the Marquess, “where I sincerely wish Mr. Burford had been before him. However, to-morrow shall end all doubts upon this point; Lady Hester is sufficiently recovered to bear the scrutiny to which I am resolved myself to subject her; and”——

“—Perhaps,” said Miss Oldham, “Mr. Burford may not object to converse with Lady Hester upon any other topic. Is he likely to call in Grosvenor-square to-day?”

This mischievous *inuendo*—for Elizabeth hated Lady Hester, because she knew Elizabeth’s falseness—failed of effect. Lord Snowdon knew enough of Burford, however deeply he might be implicated in the love part of the affair, to be quite certain that after having written the letter which he had that morning received, he would make no clandestine or covert approaches to his house. On his lips there were bitter words affecting Burford; but in his mind, although he was too proud to own it, a high opinion of the tutor’s honour and integrity.



“No, Elizabeth,” said the Marquess, “I have no apprehensions of such a visit. Mr. Burford would not, under the circumstances, call on my daughter, and if he did, I think I know my daughter too well to believe that she would receive him.”

The Marquess had, however, received a blow—an unexpected blow, and prejudiced as he now was, and disappointed as he had been because Burford could not be brought to consider the preferment which he had bestowed upon him as a retainer for services, inconsistent with his character and incompatible with his feelings; he now felt convinced that the show of honourable indignation which he made in his letter was a mere pretence to get rid of the obligations under which he felt himself; while the affection which he professed for Lord Malvern, was in fact the adulation of a flatterer, fawning upon the heir of the house, and securing, by the most undignified concessions to his will and wishes, his interest in promoting his ruinous connexion with his sister.



Perhaps Miss Oldham had no seriously evil intentions in making these disclosures of her belief in Lady Hester's attachment to Burford; but malicious people might fancy that the dislike of her present proceedings, which Lady Hester made no effort to conceal, and her consciousness that Lady Hester knew a secret which she dare not even whisper to her father, might have led her so to enrage the Marquess against his child, that she might be induced, nay compelled, to keep silence upon the point concerning which, Elizabeth most dreaded her. Miss Oldham little knew the awe in which Lady Hester stood of her father, and by the manner in which she managed him herself, could ill appreciate the timidity and caution with which others who had not the power of fascination like her's, approached him.

Intentional or not, the deed was done—the fate of Lady Hester was sealed; and such was the eagerness, as well as violence of the Marquess's fury, that he felt inclined to cry because so many hours must necessarily elapse



before his rage could burst upon her—a rage increased in a tenfold degree from its justifiable force by the unpardonable circumstance of his having been himself blind to the circumstance, and the dupe, as he considered it, of his own child; never calculating that he himself had placed his children at an immeasurable distance from him, and that his constant efforts appeared to be directed to checking their advances and chilling their affections.

The Marquess retired about eleven to the Star and Garter; and in about half an hour after his Lordship's departure, the remaining members of the party huddled closely round a small table, where cold chickens, and fruit, and an agreeable sort of potation, compounded by Lady Katharine's butler, after an old family recipe, held them in gentle converse till considerably past one o'clock, when the Cornet and his friend started for Hampton Court, and the ladies repaired to their respective apartments.

The difficulties which had, previously, so much occupied Lord Snowdon's mind with



regard to Lady Hester, were now incalculably multiplied. To *his* eyes her marriage with Burford was ruin and degradation so deep and bitter, that the very idea was deadly. The more he considered her conduct, the more he was convinced of the justness of Miss Oldham's view of the attachment—and what was he now about to do?

Burford had declared war—he had relinquished every thing which bound him to the family—and he, the head of that family, was about not only to cement a new connexion, which would naturally alienate him from the care of his daughter, even if he staid in England, but was on the eve of quitting the country for several years, leaving her—although under the care of her aunt—at the mercy of her own affections, and the importunities of her lover.

This could not be. In the course of his sleepless night, he resolved that Lady Hester should accompany them to India. Insensible to the feelings of real attachment, versed perhaps in the ways of the world, but ignorant certainly of sen-



timents such as occupied poor Lady Hester's mind, he imagined that by taking her with him, he should divert her thoughts from the object upon which they were so unfortunately placed; and even if he failed in achieving that end, he at least should have her within his reach, safe from the advances of the last man in the kingdom whom he would that she should marry.

That the future Marchioness might object to this arrangement he did not doubt; but he thought that by conceding to her all the little points which she had made, he might secure this, to him, most important one. In fact, the affair of the frustrated wedding had made so much noise, that he felt it would not be a disagreeable retreat for his daughter from London society; and that when they returned it would be so far forgotten as to afford no serious ground for uneasiness, or any valid objection to other men of rank and fortune who might wish to come forward as her suitor.

In order to carry his point, he resolved to nominate, according to Miss Oldham's desire,



Mr. Frederick Richardson one of his personal staff. He felt that this young man had behaved extremely well on the preceding evening, and had borne his gentle rebuke with great propriety. Upon him there could be little difficulty in prevailing to eat long-kept eggs and the drumsticks of turkeys; and he was an amusing person; and the Marchioness liked him; and so Cornet Richardson was already, as far as his Excellency's intentions went, gazetted in the Bengal Hukaru, A. D. C. to his Excellency the Governor-General.

It was not until daylight that sleep closed the noble Marquess's eyes; and when he awoke and rose from his bed, he felt little refreshed by the fitful slumber which during the early part of the morning had fallen upon him. He was restless—dissatisfied—angry—and what to him was worse than all, humiliated by the circumstances which had come to his knowledge.

One person most specially had incurred his anger,—poor Anne Everingham—his own cousin too: to be sure it was a cousinship far removed;



but that *she*, one of his house, to whom the honour of the family ought to have been naturally and inherently dear; that *she* should have connived at the grovelling attachment was most annoying—that she did connive at it he was sure, from the anxiety of Lady Hester to have her always with her; from the nature of the conversation in which she had engaged with Lord Elmsdale in the afternoon of the wedding-day; and from the soft and considerate manner in which she treated Burford at dinner on the following evening. Her, he should forthwith expel—another night should not pass over her head in Grosvenor-square—he could not endure a further association with her—he would not suffer his child to be longer exposed to the contamination of her society.

He breakfasted: the day was gloomy—well suited to his feelings. He walked to Lady Katharine's, and ordered his cabriolet to be there at half-past one; he was welcomed as usual with the smiles of Elizabeth, and greeted by the shrill tones of her Mamma.



The conversation had been general for some time, and the Marquess had determined not to touch upon his plan of taking Lady Hester with him to India till the last moment, and when, as he hoped, he should have secured the gratitude of Elizabeth by his attention to all her wishes, so that she might not interpose any objection to his project—at length he said,

“Elizabeth, I have determined about your friend Mr. Richardson: of course nothing is to be said of it yet; but the moment my appointment is announced, you may announce to *him* that he is one of my *aids-du-camp*.”

“Now that *is* a dear,” said Miss Oldham; “is not he, Mamma?”

“I am only too happy, Elizabeth,” said the Marquess, “to show you how anxious I am to please you.”

“Now, Mamma,” said Elizabeth, “I don’t think I *can* do what we were talking of.”

“What is that, Lady Katharine?” said the Marquess.

“Why,” said Lady Katharine, “I really



don't know that I ought to say any thing about it. It was one of dear Mr. Oldham's maxims, which he learned from his grandfather, whose daughter——"

"—— Yes, Ma'am, I know," said the Marquess, "but *you* have something to say."

"It is about Mr. Richardson," said Miss Oldham.

"Oh!" said the Marquess; "well, let me hear."

"Why," said Lady Katharine, "Mr. Richardson is one of five sons: his grandmother was the cousin of the old Bishop of that place where the Waterperries lived, who afterwards went to Berkshire; and old Mr. Waterperry, I remember, died of a fever, which he caught by attending the trials at Newbury, where, by the way——"

"I beg your pardon," said the Marquess, "but my cabriolet is at the door, and I must be in town by a little after two."

"Well, what I have to say is," continued Lady Katharine, "the eldest son of old Mr. Richardson is married to a cousin——"



"Yes, Mamma," said Elizabeth, "but 'dear' is in a hurry, so I will tell him. It is the third son we want to speak to you about: he is in the church, without the least possible chance of preferment; he has two curacies nine miles apart, and not a hope of getting any thing more. We were thinking, after you were gone last night, as you told us that Mr. Burford had resigned the living of—what is the place?"

"Silgrove," said the Marquess, watching the beautiful animation of Elizabeth's countenance as she was expatiating in favour of a second Mr. Richardson.

"Ah, Silgrove," said Elizabeth; "and we were saying, that if you had nobody particular to give it to, it would be *such* a kindness to let poor dear Mr. Richardson's brother have it."

"I did intend to offer it to the minister," said the Marquess.

"Oh, but you need not give *him* any thing more," said the *naïve* Elizabeth.

"No," said Lady Katharine: "I remember



once, in the time of Mr. Pitt, I was staying down at Broadstairs that year, and Lord——”

“Yes, Ma’am,” said the Marquess; “but about the living,—I will see about it—I will not say no.”

“And so, dear, you won’t say yes?” said Miss Oldham, placing the fairest hand that ever was seen upon the Marquess’s shoulder—a prettier epaulette could not be imagined.

“I will say yes, if you really wish it,” said the Marquess.

“Indeed, indeed I do!” said the charming girl, with increased animation.

“Well, then, let it be so,” said the Marquess; “but of this let me entreat you to say nothing, not even to Mr. Richardson, till you hear from me; because, if there should be a point made about it, I must postpone your friend’s preference to some other opportunity. And now, till to-morrow, adieu.”

“Good-bye, dear,” said Miss Oldham, rewarding her intended for all his kindnesses, in the warmest and most gracious manner possible.



“ Oh ! what a horrid day,” exclaimed Lady Katharine, who had looked out of the window during the last farewell of her daughter and her future son-in-law. “ Lord Snowdon, had not you better have a close carriage ? it pours, absolutely pours with rain.”

“ No, thank you,” said Lord Snowdon ; “ I prefer the cab. Adieu ! to-morrow I dine with you, and I dare say I shall have some news for you.”

“ Take care, and don’t catch cold,” said Lady Katharine ; “ I remember Dr. Buckskin telling me—the man who cured the Pope of the sciatica, got the golden spur, and was afterwards knighted by the King, for”——

In the midst of this speech the Marquess escaped, and jumped into his cabriolet with all the grace and agility of a youth. The impatient horse, tired of pawing the ground, sprang forward, and in a moment the Illustrious was out of sight.

In society, half the pride of Lord Snowdon melted down by the natural warmth of associa-



tion, and the gilding rubbed off by collision with his equals, or those who, at least in the same houses and same rooms with him, considered themselves so; but when he was out in the streets and the roads, his dignity became as stiff and important as ever. His air and manner, the sovereign contempt with which he deigned to look at the people whom he passed, and the entire satisfaction which possessed him as he drove the finest horses London could produce, and the best turned-out equipage that rattled through its streets, were beyond imitation, as they were without precedent.

In this mood of mightiness, his Lordship was driving at a slapping pace across Barnes Common, when his horse shied at a donkey, who was very wisely, and by no means like a jackass, standing up out of the rain under a hedge. The suddenness of the shock snapped the shaft of the cabriolet, and the career of his Excellency the Governor-General Bahauder, K. G., was suddenly stopped, with no other damage than two or three kicks against the floor of the cab,



from the heels of the proud and spirited animal that was drawing it. The rain was coming down in torrents.

"Shaft broken, my Lord," said the Tiger.

"What the deuce is to be done?" said the Marquess; "not a house near—no umbrella?"

"No, my Lord," said the boy. "It's the worst place too as it could have happened in, my Lord," said the man, "for there's no house near."

"To be sure. What's this thing coming?" said his Lordship.

"It's the Richmond hondibus, my Lord."

"Oh! mercy on us—is there any body in it?" said the Marquess; who began to feel that rain is no respecter of persons.

"Town, Sir, town!" said the fellow on the step of the door; "plenty of room."

"My Lord, I think you had better get in," said the Tiger.

"Well—I—here, open the door," said the Marquess, who certainly never had before seen the inside of an omnibus, and never expected to have been driven to such an expedient. How-



ever, it saved him from the rain, from cold, rheumatism, and all the "ills that flesh (even that of the Plinlimmons) is heir to," and might be immortalized in history, as having been graced with the presence of the greatest Governor-General that ever was destined to govern India.

The Marquess stepped in, and the conductor gave the word "all right;" but this was done so soon after the admission of his Lordship into the vehicle, and he was so long picking out a clean place to sit down upon, that the jerk of the hearse threw his Lordship forward into the lap of the fattest woman that ever was seen out on a caravan at a fair, who, unfortunately, was carrying a jar of pickled onions on her knee, which was upset by the Marquess's tumble, and in its fall saturated the front of his Lordship's waistcoat and stock with its fragrant juice.

The Marquess made a thousand well-bred apologies, and was got up upon his legs by the exertions of the fat woman, whose struggles to rescue herself from the imposing weight of nobility, materially assisted the efforts of a good-



natured dirty little man in the corner, and a thin spare woman, who was carrying a bantum-cock and three hens in a basket to London, having upon her other hand a large-faced child, with great blue eyes, and a cold in its head. It wore a brown skin cap with a gold band round it, while a green and white net comforter was twisted round its chin and body; its dress, generally, bearing very strong evidence that the dear little thing was an extremely bad traveller.

Near the door, and over whose shins the Marquess first tumbled upon getting in, was placed a stout, blue-aproned market-gardener; and opposite to him, a smartish looking man, with a Mosaic gold chain round his neck, and a bunch of oily curls coming out from under his hat just over his ear—he was the dandy of the party.

Off went the omnibus—rattle went all the windows—slap went the weather boards—bang went the axle-trees; and away went the whole concern, at a rate and with a noise, of which the Marquess till that moment had but a very faint conception.



The dirty dandy in the corner, as soon as he saw the involuntary contortions of poor Lord Snowdon's countenance, as the huge thing bumped up and down, and twisted first one way and then another, began to affect a similar distaste for the conveyance; and to mark his sympathy with the new arrival, forthwith bumped himself up close to him. He looked at the Governor-General Bahauder for a moment or two, and then pulling out a sort of whitey-brown paper funnel, which did duty for a snuff-box, offered it to the Marquess.

"Do you snuff, Sir?" said the dandy.

"No, I'm obliged to you," replied the Marquess.

"Have you been down at Richmond, starting?" asked the dandy.

"Sir!" said Lord Snowdon.

"I mean," said the man, "have you been acting a few?"

"I don't exactly understand you," said the Marquess.

"Oh! come, governor, none of your non-



sense — no tricks upon travellers!" said the dandy.

"Governor!" thought the Marquess; "what the deuce can he mean?"

"I think," continued the stranger, "I have smoked a pipe or two before now along with you in the Coal-hole."

"Sir!" said the Marquess, "I never smoked a pipe, or was in a coal-hole, in the whole course of my existence."

"I say, governor, now you *are* coming it strong," said the monster; "you think I don't know you, eh, O. P. and P. S.? I say, what was you a-doing with Mrs. Linnegar in the Greenwich coach last Thursday week?—eh!—I don't know whether you ever smokes—I smoked you."

"I think, Sir, you are mistaken," said the Marquess.

"What! mistaken in the cut of your jib?" said the dirty dandy; "no, governor, that's no go —there can't be two sich as you."

"I fancy you will find that you are in



error, Sir," said Lord Snowdon beginning to boil.

"What! my Solomon Lob," said the exhilarated fiend, "you don't mean to deny yourself to *me*! No, no—whether you have smoked pipes and been in the Coal-hole, I won't argue; but I know this, I have paid many a shilling to see you, and never grudged a penny of them."

"Sir," said the Marquess, "I repeat you are mistaken."

And what made these dignified replies of his Lordship more ridiculous, was the fact, that in consequence of the noise of the carriage, he was obliged to bawl them out at a pitch of his voice, which, upon no other occasion, he ever condescended to adopt; whilst by the irregular bumpings and thumpings of the vehicle, his Lordship's graceful attitudes were reduced to something very like the uncontrollable antics of a stuffed Punch in a puppet-show.

"I tell you once for all," said the dandy, "it's no manner of use your trying to gammon me,



Buggins is Buggins all the world over—on the stage or in it.”

“Sir,” said the Marquess, “I am not Mr. Buggins, and I never saw that person in the whole course of my existence.”

“Then if you never did,” said the facetious passenger, “I’d advise you to look at your own sweet countenance in the looking-glass, the moment you get to your lodgings, and you may save your two shillings for paying to go to see him in the play.”

The horrid monster having here worked up the conversation to a climax, Lord Snowdon hoped he might remain at rest. But no—it had scarcely ceased when the woman on his other side, believing him “quite the gentleman,” said, “Pray, Sir, are you a judge of cocks and hens?”

“Ma’am!” said the Marquess.

“Because I knows nothing of them myself, and I’m afraid perhaps this basket is too small for ’em,” said the woman, “they keeps a pecking and a digging at one another so.”



“Ma’am,” replied his Lordship, “I know nothing about fowls.”

Here a truce seemed to have been agreed upon. The omnibus stopped at the Red Lion, Putney, and the sudden silence of its sonorous machinery which ensued, induced a corresponding quiet in the passengers—the surrounding noise having hitherto encouraged noise in the passengers. All that happened during the check was, that the dirty dandy resumed his seat near the door, and took the opinion of the man on the steps as to their fellow-passenger being Buggins or not.

After a short delay, during which several aristocratic carriages rolled by—at which periods the Marquess adopted the celebrated system of *ostrichism*, and hid his head—the omnibus rattled on towards town. At Walham-green, two tall scraggy girls from a boarding-school,

“Sickly, smiling, gay, young, and awkward,”

were poked in. A gentleman with very red mustachios, was picked up at the Queen’s Elm



gate; and a poulterer's boy, with a couple of skinned rabbits in a tray, was added to the party at the corner of Sloane-street, the said rabbits being on their way back to a poulterer's in Duke-street, St. James's, because they were not fresh.

Ah! thought Lord Snowdon, if my old friend Noah had had such company as this in the ark, I am sure he would have preferred death to security in such society, and have jumped into the flood. Away they went, up the hill in the outward of St. George's, Hanover-square, upon which thousands of pounds have been spent, each thousand making it worse than it was before, tossing and tumbling up hillocks and down hollows, equalled only in effect by that produced by the unbreaking billows of the Bay of Biscay upon the bows and quarters of a crank craft.

At the top of St. James's-street the caravan stopped. The day had cleared up; the pavement was dry. The King was in town; there were many people about. Lord Snowdon just peeped through the windows, and saw groups



collected—men he knew. *Here* it was clear he could not get out—whither should he go? how far—what place was safe? At length he resolved upon going the whole journey to the Bank, so that he might emerge in the city, and then enveloping himself in a hackney-coach, reach the habitable part of town, without fear of discovery.

“Any body for White Oss Cellar?” said the man on the steps. Out went the dirty dandy, the man with the apron, and the boy with the rabbits. But their places were instantly supplied by a portly gentleman lugging in a small-sized green garden-engine with a fan spout, and three fishing-rods, which he had just bought at the corner of Albemarle-street, and a fond mother, who had provided herself with a heap of toys for her six children.

Still the Marquess kept peering out of his prison—nobody saw him—and it was pleasant to peep through the loop-holes thus unobserved. In a few minutes all was right, but, the pavement in Piccadilly was up; it was necessary, therefore,



that the huge machine should go down St. James's-street; and so it did; but short was its progress in that line of march—all the bumpings and thumpings which its rapid course in the earlier part of its journey had excited now were to be compensated for. The driver smacked his whip, the horses obeyed the sound, when bang went something, and in an instant the whole fabric came down with a crash like thunder, exactly in front of White's.

The shrieks of the women, the cries of the men, the noise of the fall, all combined to attract a thousand spectators. Fifty heads were out of Crockford's coffee-room; all the guardsmen rushed into the balcony; and in the bow-window of White's itself, which was instantly thrown up, were heard the well-known voices of the leaders of the *clique*, in a sort of war-whoop, which, like the whistle of Rhoderick Dhu, roused the whole clan to observe the dreadful *denouement*.

In detail were the passengers extricated. The dear little boarding-school girls jumped out first; the fat man with his garden-engine stuck in the



door-way, and was only ejected by the ponderosity of the still fatter woman with what she called her "inion jar" clasped like a lovely baby to her bosom; the lady with the toys was trampled under foot; the sick child was jammed under the dirty man in the corner, and the thin woman who took care of it, getting anxious about its fate, unwillingly, abandoned the poultry; and when the most noble the Marquess of Snowdon, K. G. and Governor-General of India, emerged, amidst the cries of "take care of the old gentleman," he came out without his hat, with a fine bantam cock perched upon his head, and a couple of fuzzy-legged hens roosting upon his shoulders.

A shout of laughter rent the sky—the little boys laughed, the old women laughed, and the fat man with the garden-engine, stood and laughed himself nearly into a fit.

The instant Lord Snowdon was seen thus "roosted upon," half a dozen men ran out of White's to rescue and shelter him; but this made bad worse: and though having housed him, as a



matter of hospitality, he was yet, politically speaking, upon the tenderest ground, and did not yet belong to them. His gratitude was, in his opinion, as painful as any thing could be, until a hoarse demand from the conductor of the omnibus, for his two *shillins*, made in a tone, which implied a desire upon his Lordship's part, to get off without paying, convinced him that there are still lower depths of misery than the lowest.

"The Colonel's" green carriage was at the door of White's, which, with his usual kindness, he offered to the suffering Marquess, who, availing himself of the favourable opportunity, threw himself into it, and anathematizing every thing upon the face of the earth, which had contributed to this most signal discomfiture, hastened home to Grosvenor-square, to begin a performance of a much more serious nature.



## CHAPTER XIII.

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It may easily be conceived that the combination of circumstances, and "untoward events" which had occurred to the noble Marquess, subsequently to his acquisition of the important intelligence which he had received from Miss Oldham, with respect to the hitherto hidden prepossession or affection, (as he feared it might be,) which his daughter felt for his son's tutor, had not rendered him a particularly agreeable companion any where.

He was too much of an adept in looks and manners, and infinitely too sensitive upon such points, not to perceive that the interest which the men at White's had affected to take in his rescue from the wreck of the ponderous caravan,



partook infinitely more of the ridiculous than the sympathetic, and that not one of the whole party present, felt any thing really and truly, but the most malicious gratification at an *exposé*, which, however lightly other men of equal rank and pretensions might have been disposed to consider it, they were well assured, would be to him a subject of constant and continued mortification.

While he was with them, he felt his only policy was to appear deceived by their civilities and gratified by their attentions; but, all this forced suavity curdled as he proceeded homewards; and fraught as he was with serious anger, combining in its character grief immeasurable, and vexation incalculable, he worked himself up into a state of fury and desperation, such as with all his extraordinary vindictiveness of pride, and violence of temper, he seldom permitted himself to be seen in.

Arrived at home, he hastily opened and read his letters, one of which was, as he expected, from Downing-street, begging him to call there at six o'clock, after the return of the ministers



from St. James's. This gratified him for the moment : he anticipated the communication which he was to receive, and felt, at least, that however much his private affairs, and the politics of his domestic circle, might be disarranged and entangled, in the more exalted course of public life, he might be enabled to compensate, in his own person and character, for the degradation and debasement which his unfortunate daughter had incurred by her attachment to a person, who, however respectable in his way, he felt to be nothing more than a menial of his household, somewhat higher in rank than his house steward or his confidential *valet*.

Little did poor Lady Hester anticipate the storm that was so soon to burst upon her devoted head ! little did Miss Everingham, who was sitting reading to her, when the Marquess arrived, imagine that her own history, as connected with his Lordship, would be terminated before she had completed the volume upon which she was engaged ! and least of all did either of them foresee the magnitude of the change which one



short hour was to work in all the prospects of their future lives.

After inquiring for Lady Hester, the illustrious man proceeded to the boudoir, where the victims of his ire were seated. He entered the room pale as death, his lips quivering with rage; he closed the door, cast a withering look upon them both, but spoke not.

"My dearest father," said Lady Hester, "what on earth is the matter!—are you ill?"

"Mad!" said his Lordship; "stand from me—touch me not—my hatred may drive me to some tremendous crime."

"For heaven's sake!" said Miss Everingham, throwing down her book, "what—"

"Let me hear no talk of heaven from your polluted lips," said Lord Snowdon; "lips that have lent their aid to the ruin, the absolute ruin of this wretched and unhappy girl."

"Why call your child wretched and unhappy?" said Lady Hester.

"Child!" exclaimed the Marquess, "I disown you—I cast you from me! I repeat to you my



injunction not to come near me. I will not curse you if I can command myself; but no endearments, no palliation, no tears—no, none of these—can avail you! we are parted, Madam, for ever—aye, for ever!”

“At least, my father,” said Lady Hester, “let me know my crime.”

“Father!” said the Marquess sneeringly, “I disbelieve it—I cannot be the father of so base and mean a being. I am aware of the influence of a confidante—a female friend—friend! what a profanation!—I know that a mean sycophant, a poor dependent, may, for her own interest, be led to encourage hopes, and tamper with feelings, which she herself in all probability has first excited; but, by heavens, the thing is ended here! What future course to pursue, I do not clearly see—but for the present, it is done—I am decided.”

“Lord Snowdon,” said Miss Everingham, bursting into tears, “I cannot misunderstand your coarse allusions: how have I deserved this outrage?”

“Ask that wretch whom I once believed my



daughter!" said the Marquess; "*she* knows the secret confidence which exists between you; she knows, as I well thought she did, the tone and character of the conversation which with a fiend-like zeal you undertook to hold with Lord Elmsdale on the wedding-day. Wedding, did I say! upon that day when I, and all that are mine, were held up to the sneering ridicule of the vulgar, and made the common town talk of the mob! Yes, Ma'am, *you* it was, who taught that whining, puling mushroom of the peerage, to believe his declared bride engaged in heart to some other object! Ma'am, do not presume to contradict me—I will not be opposed! I know what I say; and although I now announce to you, that this day is the last of your residence in my house, and your association with that degraded girl, I wish that our eternal separation should not be marked by any scene which, in the public eye, might give increased effect to what has already occurred."

"Indeed," said Lady Hester, "you wrong her. If there is blame, I alone am culpable;



and yet I know not what I have done. Have I ever disobeyed your wishes? Did I refuse Lord Elmsdale? Did I dismiss him?"

"What, Hester," said Lord Snowdon, "do you dare to bandy words with me? Do you presume, even by implication, to charge *me* with having driven the man away? Why did I?—because, knowing the fact of your disgraceful love for another, he felt himself preparing to do me a favour in rescuing your character from obloquy and shame by completing a contract to which he knew you were an unwilling party."

"Father," said Lady Hester, falling on her knees, and catching his hand, "do not treat me thus! I have not sinned against you: I am ready now to fulfil your wishes. Spare me—spare me! I would die for you, if you required it."

"Your death," said the Marquess, "would be more desirable to me than to see you live disgraced as you must be eternally."

"For shame, Lord Snowdon!" said Miss



Everingham. "I am a weak and humble woman, but I protest, in the name of the God that made me, against such language. She is your child—devoted to you—without a thought beyond obedience to your will; who, by no act, no word, no thought, has evinced rebellion to your wishes; and as a Christian woman, I will not let her stay to hear your curses."

"Miss Everingham," said the Marquess, "how dare you venture to use this language here—to me—in my own house? Have I not a right to correct my child? Have I not a right to speak my feelings and express my anger? I ask you—you, Ma'am—I even condescend to ask *you*, what would your feelings be—if you can imagine such a circumstance—were you in my place, after having trained up a daughter in the course which the child of such a person ought to run in life, if you found all your hopes blighted, your expectations thwarted, and your labour for her advantage brought to nought, by her encouragement—secret encouragement—yes, Miss Everingham—deceitful, secret encouragement of



a grovelling passion for a menial in her father's house."

"Menial!" said Lady Hester.

"Yes, menial!—the hireling tutor of your brother!" said the Marquess. "Affect no shame, feign no surprise—I know it all. Hence the fine feeling which prompted the fellow to resign his preferment and starve—as, please God, if I can influence his career in life, he shall—rather than soothe away the difficulties which interposed between your feelings and your duty;—hence the refusal of your brother, under his influence, to *honour* your marriage with his presence;—hence all the evils which have fallen upon me, and which now it is mine to revenge!"

"Oh!" said Lady Hester, "if I could but reach your heart—if I could but tell you how deceived you are in both of us!"

"Both of ye!" said, or rather screamed, the Marquess, "both of you! What! are you coupled, even in thought—paired, even in imagination? Both of ye! What! Lady Hester



Plinlimmon, the daughter of the Marquess of Snowdon, the daughter of a house, whose line of noble ancestry is registered unbroken for ages, coupled with Mr. Charles Burford, the son of a country curate, hired and paid wages to teach her brother Latin ! Is it come to this ?”

“ In justice,” said Lady Hester, who seemed to rally from her wretchedness, “ tell me, Sir, to whom are you indebted for this base, this cruel falsehood ?”

“ Falsehood !” said Lord Snowdon, “ what ! do you attempt to deny it ? Do you wish to deceive me—to cajole me ?”

“ Did I not prove,” said Lady Hester, “ the falsehood of such a story by consenting to marry Lord Elmsdale ?”

“ Your consent,” replied her father, “ rendered all that preceded it the more atrocious. Yes ! you did consent, and unless your bodily weakness had not made evident the wicked concealment of your mind, you would have ventured to give your hand to one, while your heart was devoted to another.”



"If it were so," said Lady Hester, "and I had, in obedience to a parent's command, become the wife of Lord Elmsdale, assure yourself that I should have done so honestly and conscientiously. I have not, Sir, been so ill brought up, nor have I profited so little from the counsels of those to whom you have consigned me, as not to know, and knowing it, to do my duty. If I had formed an affection—improvident as you describe it—religion would have taught me that I was to sacrifice it to my filial obedience—I should have done so."

"This is too clear!" said the Marquess. "Wretched girl, you have confessed"—

"I do confess!" said Lady Hester. "I am ready to die, if you wish it; but I will not conceal that in which I saw no shame. What you have heard, Sir, may be true; but as I tell you, and as Anne can tell you—she whom so much you have traduced—it was conquered and overcome."

"Anne traduced!" said his Lordship; "no, Hester, she is not traduced. I know the line



she has pursued—that has been told me too : she has acted the part—consistent perhaps with her dependent and expectant state—of go-between—confederate—letter-carrier—conveyer of messages : I know it.”

“ My Lord,” said Miss Everingham, “ it is false—false as the fiend who thus has poisoned your mind against your child.”

“ Fiend !” said the Marquess, “ who dares pronounce that word ? She who told me this knows not the meaning of a falsehood. Shocked and disgusted as she has been at what she saw passing in my house when she was here, she felt it a duty to undeceive the man who is so soon to be her husband.”

“ Elizabeth Oldham !” exclaimed Lady Hester. “ Can *she* have said all this ? Oh ! be still, my heart—be still, my tongue ! Did she not tell you more ? Did she not say that when I betrayed such feelings as you charge me with, she herself”——

“ Be silent, I command you,” said the Marquess. “ On the peril of my curse be silent.



Dare but to utter one syllable derogatory to the character, the heart, the mind, of your future mother-in-law, and the heaviest malediction that a father can pronounce shall fall upon your devoted head ! It is to the aversion of your heartless brother that I am indebted for your marked hatred of her who once was your friend. It was to rescue you from the privations which you must undergo when a mistress of the house assumes her dominion, that I so particularly urged your previous marriage—this you have frustrated. The fellow upon whom you have fixed your affections is now a beggar : pride—mean, paltry pride—and what is more contemptible ?—has induced him to throw up a piece of preferment, of which, having given it him, I could not myself have deprived him—he has quitted your brother, and he is a beggar. Now, Madam, hear me :—in this house you cannot and shall not remain after my marriage.”

Lady Hester burst into a flood of tears, and dropped her head upon Miss Everingham’s shoulder.



“Aye! faint—weep—*die*, if you will,” said Lord Snowdon, in a tone of fiend-like malignity; “I cast you off; I utterly abandon you! Some asylum must be found for you; but not in the society of that dear friend! And where shall that asylum be? who, when I have cast you off, will shelter or protect you? who will be your champion then?”

“I WILL!” said a voice of thunder; “I, Sir—her brother—her devoted brother, who, thanks to Heaven, is here to shield and save her.”

“Malvern! my son!” exclaimed Lord Snowdon.

“Not your son, my Lord,” said Malvern, “unless Hester is your daughter. I came to England the moment I heard of the failure of her marriage, because I thought Lord Elmsdale might have acted unfairly, and that it would have been my duty to call him to account. I have been satisfied on that point before I came here. I came to England to vindicate my sister against dishonour: thank Heaven, I am here, my Lord, to protect her from tyranny.”



“What!” said Lord Snowdon, pausing even in his rage until he had closed the door, in order that the violence of the discussion might not produce an effect upon the establishment, “do you mean to uphold my child in her rebellion against me?”

“I mean, Sir,” said Lord Malvern, “to do no such thing; far be it from me to uphold in her a disposition which I trust you have never discovered in any conduct of mine. Hester has not rebelled; she has sacrificed all to duty and obedience. Unwillingly I have heard the greater part of the discussion which has passed between you; and I pronounce, from all I know—not, Sir, from hearsay evidence, but from my own knowledge—that her conduct has been exemplary; but I also know, that after what has transpired within the last ten minutes, that however fit Miss Oldham may be for the *wife* of Lord Snowdon, she is the last person in the world who may be trusted as the mother of his children.”

“Ah! there again,” said the Marquess, “Miss



Oldham is to be dragged forward in the discussion."

"Not so," said Lord Malvern. "Miss Oldham has volunteered her services, and therefore rendered herself obnoxious to our remarks; she is safe as far as I am concerned, although my duty is at odds with my honour: my sister, Sir, must never be subject to her controul."

"She will not be under her controul, Sir," replied the Marquess; "of *that* I will take especial care."

"My Lord," said Lord Malvern, "this is the most painful moment of my existence: I am forced into conduct which I feel that nothing but the extremest case could justify. I have heard the denunciation of Hester from your own lips: she is blameless—faultless. The time is past when she may trust to your kindness, or expect your protection; your heart is alienated from her. I"—

"Sir," said the Marquess, in a voice of thunder, "do you recollect that you are my son?"

"I do," said Lord Malvern, "but I also re-



collect that she is my sister ; and by the sacred memory of our mother—lost to us before we could duly appreciate her virtues and her merits—I will protect her to the death ! Father, thus I appeal to you : the page of history is not a blank—the deeds of other days are there recorded—the request my dying mother made with respect to Hester, I will see fulfilled ; and the first step to its accomplishment is her removal from this house.”

“ What, Sir,” said the Marquess, “ do you presume to say that you will drag your sister from under my protection ? ”

“ No, Sir,” said Lord Malvern, “ but if she feels as I do, she will voluntarily leave a house which must so shortly cease to be her home.”

“ Oh, Malvern,” said Lady Hester, “ what course on earth can I pursue ? ”

“ Obey your father, Madam ! ” said the Marquess.

“ She will obey you, Sir,” said Lord Malvern, “ in quitting your roof. You have threatened her with expulsion : this she must not at any



rate endure ; but to endure it, in order that she may give place to Miss Oldham, is more than I can suffer."

" Stay here she shall !" said the Marquess.

" If she please she shall," said Lord Malvern ;  
" she is of age to judge for herself ; her fortune is, I believe, at her own disposal, and her own command."

" Indeed !" said the Marquess, who was particularly sensitive on this particular point.

" And if she feel disposed to relieve herself from the state of thralldom in which she is at this moment, I will protect and vindicate her, as I have done before."

" And present her as a wife, perhaps, to your tutor !" said Lord Snowdon.

" Mr. Burford," replied Lord Malvern, " is *not* my tutor—he is my friend—an independent friend—his disinterestedness is proved—his honour is established. Upon that point Hester may act as she pleases. Whatever else may happen, I repeat, the memory of her mother shall not be disgraced in her person."



"Do you imagine," said Lord Snowdon, "that the decencies and decorum of society would be best consulted by your withdrawing your sister from her father's house, unattended, unaccompanied by any body but her brother?"

"Miss Everingham, Sir," said Lord Malvern, "has received the same unqualified announcement of your determination that this day shall be the last of her residence here: she who has been for so many years the companion and protectress selected by yourself for Hester, will, I doubt not, continue that protection and association. I am convinced that the course I propose will be the best for all parties: the future Marchioness and Hester never can meet again. For myself, I most distinctly decline any communication with her; therefore let it be as I suggest, and let us remove from a scene in which our presence cannot be desirable."

"Malvern," said Lord Snowdon, whose rage had subsided into something like mortification, at having gone too far in his violence, "I admit your dislike to this second marriage to be natural."



“On that subject, Sir,” said Lord Malvern, “not a word—you are free to choose, and free to act upon that choice, and Heaven send you happy. And remember, Sir, I am pledged to contribute my share to the favourable completion of all the necessary arrangements of the marriage: all I feel justified in insisting upon, is the security of my sister from a repetition of the scene which has just been acted, and that point I unequivocally make the condition of my implicit acquiescence in every other particular connected with the affair.”

“I must terminate this discussion,” said his Lordship, “I have other affairs which command my immediate attention. I have been ruffled—agitated—acted upon by a thousand contending influences—to-morrow I will endeavour”——

“To-morrow!” said Lord Malvern; “if I am not mistaken in what I have heard, Lady Katharine Oldham and her daughter are coming hither to-morrow; besides, to-morrow will not”——

“Malvern,” said the Marquess, “take your own course. I am in your hands, Sir, and you



know it. I leave you—act as you please; for, by my hopes of mercy, I will not retract a syllable of what I have said. If we are to part, let it be so. You can scarcely imagine that any sacrifice on your part would compensate to me for humbling myself before my children. On another point I am inflexibly determined: Miss Everingham and I meet no more—to her I attribute all the evils that have fallen on my house. I need add nothing. I shall return by seven o'clock, and I leave the conduct of the intervening period to yourselves. But, remember, whatever may be the result of your deliberations, I am resolved, at all hazards, to maintain the dignity, and sustain the character of the lady, who is so shortly to be my wife.”

Saying which, the Marquess quitted the room to fulfil his engagement in Downing-street, believing, that let what might be the result of all that had occurred, the safest way of maintaining his importance was to leave the assembled party, so that the onus of acting in the emergency should rest upon them.



The course which they were to pursue, or rather the choice they were to make, was a difficult one; the responsibility Lord Malvern was ready to incur, tremendous. Yet it was quite evident that war was already openly proclaimed between the insidious, heartless Elizabeth, and her suffering former friend and future daughter-in-law. Their continued association was out of the question.

Lady Hester explained to her brother, now more than ever endeared to her by his zealous exertions in her behalf, how bitterly she felt the abruptnesses of Miss Oldham, and the unfeeling observations of her loquacious parent. It was evident that the next day must bring them into collision, and after the past storm and its consequences, their meeting seemed to be impossible. In fact, it was evident that the separation of the family, an event which would naturally have occurred in a few days, had actually taken place. Indeed, Lord Malvern's exhortations to his sister, no longer to endure the cruelty of her father, excited and called into action by his future wife,



were successfully seconded by Miss Everingham, who declared, that let Lady Hester stay or not, no person on earth should induce *her*, after the coarse language and unfeeling conduct of Lord Snowdon, to remain another hour in his house.

What proceedings resulted from the debate which ensued, the reader will discover presently. It is not our business to listen to all the arguments which were adduced on either side by the different parties. All we want to ascertain, is the effect produced by those arguments, and the consequences which ensued. While this discussion is in progress, we must follow the Marquess on his ministerial visit.

It would be extremely difficult to describe, and, perhaps, equally so, to appreciate the state of Lord Snowdon's mind and feelings, as he paced the pavement towards Westminster. His indignation at the manner in which his daughter had misplaced her affections, was not in the slightest degree modified by the dutiful obedience with which she had conquered her inclinations. Nor was his anger against his son at all qualified



by the sneering tone in which, as it appeared to him, he refrained from retaliating upon Miss Oldham, for her communication of Lady Hester's early partiality for Mr. Burford ; but least of all was his detestation of Miss Everingham moderated by the resolute tone and determined manner in which she had "dared" to express her feelings.

At any other moment of his life, the scene in Grosvenor-square would, in all probability, have produced a catastrophe, infinitely more serious than his departure from it ; but just at this crisis, the very day on which all his hopes of controul and domination upon the great scale, were to be realized, he *could* not afford to waste so much of his energies upon his private affairs, however important and interesting, as he might have spared from the public upon any other occasion. Of his Governor-generalship he was certain—so far he might have set his mind at rest, had it not been for the doubt thrown over the acquisition of the garter—the personal promise, which the minister had to overcome—that kept him in a state of frightful suspense ; for, in point of fact,



of the two, if he had to abandon one of his objects, the personal decoration, derived from so illustrious a source, would have been the favourite.

In a turmoil of contending worries he reached Downing-street, where, to his infinite disappointment, his noble friend was not: he had left St. James's, and the King had left town; but as the Premier was in cabinet, and as no time could be specified for the duration of its sitting, the Marquess left word that he would call in the morning, and retraced his steps.

In going up again, he met most of the few presentable people in town; and having bowed stiffly to one, smiled graciously upon another, and nodded to a third, he fixed upon the most gay and graceful of all our dandies, to walk up St. James's-street homewards. Their conversation was scarcely of sufficient interest to be repeated; nor would the walk itself be worth our notice, had not the gratification the Marquess felt in having under his protection one of the most popular, highly-born, and highly-bred Earls in Lodge's list, at a season when peers were scarce,



been somewhat damped by no less than two of those minor incidents by which his Lordship, as we have seen, was, above all men, peculiarly annoyed.

They reached the corner of Albemarle-street in safety, all the surrounding scenery and its adjuncts and accessories, bringing strongly to the Marquess's mind, his wretched misadventure of the morning; when the crowd of coachmen and fellows plying for passengers—who block up the *trottoir* as effectually as their lumbering carriages choke up the middle of the street—becoming extremely inconvenient and disagreeable to Lord Massingberg, the Marquess's companion, he began a short but vehement attack upon the odious nuisance by which they were really seriously inconvenienced.

“Upon my life,” said his Lordship, “these fellows seem to fancy that nobody except themselves has a right to the pavement; in consequence of which we, who have nothing to do with their infernal hearses and coaches, are absolutely stopped on the King's highway, and put



in bodily fear, without any chance of punishing the offenders."

"Monsters!" said Lord Snowdon.

"Exceeded only," said Lord Massingberg, "by those who get into their horrid caravans."

"Down the road! down the road!—Fulham—Fulham—Fulham!—Richmond—Brentford—Kew—Turnham Green—just going off!—Richmond—Richmond—Richmond!" said a dozen voices in a dozen different tones.

"Down the road this afternoon, my Lord?" said one of the most resolute, coming up to the Marquess, who endeavoured to escape him.

"What an infernal bore!" said Lord Massingberg.

"Horrid!" said the Marquess.

"Wery sorry for the accident this morning, my Lord," said the man, pertinaciously following up the Governor-general of India; "wery sorry, indeed, for the accident this morning, my Lord; hope you didn't damage yourself gitting out—no fault of the horses—it vos the haxle-tree vot snapped."



“Get away, Sir!” said the Marquess.

“Get away!” answered the man; “it vos you, you wanted to get away, when the ondibus broke down, vithout forking out your fare—there’s a lord for you—my eye, there he goes!”

“What does the scoundrel mean?” said Lord Massingberg, to whom, of all the birds in the air, or lords of the creation, Lord Snowdon would least have desired the incident of the earlier part of the day to be known.

“Oh, nothing—nothing,” said the Marquess; “it is one of those unfortunate mistakes I so frequently suffer by, from being mistaken for a Mister somebody—a player at Covent Garden.”

“But he called you my Lord,” said the Earl.

“Ah, then,” said the Marquess, “if he did, I conclude that in the morning he mistook the player for me,—it comes to the same point.”

The Earl of Massingberg was not to be so deceived. He was a wit amongst Lords, and a Lord amongst wits; like the parrot in the fable, he said nothing, but he thought the more. The



results were particularly disagreeable to His Excellency the Governor-general, as we may perhaps find out hereafter.

There is a proverbial, not very *recherché* phrase, about "getting out of the frying-pan into the fire." Never was it better illustrated than at the moment when the unlucky recognition of the Marquess by the omnibus driver had been overcome. The friends had passed across Dover-street, when a scream, or rather shout, was heard from the top of a Bath and Bristol coach, which, borne on the breeze, seemed like a call upon "Lord Snowdon." He heard but heeded it not; he was too surely conscious that he could not be deceived in the sound—he hurried on, and almost dragged his friend along with him; but the south-east corner of Devonshire-house wall had scarcely been achieved, before he was plucked by the sleeve.

"How d'ye do, my Lord?" was the first salutation of a plump, rosy-cheeked man, enveloped in a white bear's-skin coat, with his head well tied up in a silk handkerchief, over which he



wore an oil-skin covered hat—every thing bespeaking preparation for a journey.

“Another mistake,” said Lord Massingberg.

“I—I—”

“Oh, my Lord,” said the traveller, “you don’t know me in this gear. My missus and I are off—outside’s the best this weather, and cheapest in all weathers; but I was determined, as I did chance to see you, to ask you if what we heard down at Shuttlework is true?”

“Oh!” said his Lordship, “Mr. Wiseman—I see.—The Mayor of my town,” added the Marquess to Lord Massingberg.

“Ah,” said Mr. Wiseman—for Wiseman it was —“that’s just *it*—that’s where it is! We have heard down at Shuttlework, that your Lordship wants to sell us. Now, I tell you just what it is—we won’t be sold; and they say that the price of our independence, is to be the Governorship of the West Hinge, or some such place, for you.”

“Mr. Wiseman,” said the Marquess, “you have dined, I presume?”

“Yes, that I have,” said Wiseman, very much



inclined to be extremely impudent, "and have drank tea too, my Lord—and so I hope I may always be able to do—and no thanks to your Lordship; but I can tell you—for I am determined to have my say out—that the corporation of Shuttlework are not a flock of sheep to be driven wherever we are wanted to go; no, nor to follow a bell-wether wherever he may want to lead us."

The pride and indignation of the Marquess were boiling over, but he knew he must controul both: he had a great game to play, and was not to knock over the board, because he was thwarted in his first move.

"My dear Mr. Wiseman," said his Lordship, "nobody wishes either to lead or controul you; and as for going Governor to the West Indies, I assure you, upon my honour, no such thing is even probable."

"Well then, it's to the east," said Wiseman, "and that's just the same."

"And where did you get this information?" asked Lord Snowdon.

"Why, I got it from a friend of your own, my



Lord," said Wiseman: "Bill Richardson, which I met this very blessed morning in Bishopsgate-street."

"Who is your friend Bill Richardson?" whispered Lord Massingberg.

"Heaven knows!" said the Marquess.

"I don't think Heaven has much to do with it, my Lord," said Wiseman; "Bill Richardson told me this very morning that you had promised him the living of Silgrove, and that he had got a letter by the two-penny post from his brother, which is a soldier officer quartered somewhere near town, and he told him, that you were to be Governor-general of something—what, I didn't rightly understand—and that you had changed sides in consequence thereof."

"And pray," said the Marquess, who began to be seriously annoyed at the *vraisemblance* of the history, "who may Bill Richardson be?"

"Why, as good for nothing a chap as ever lived," said Wiseman, "though I say it, as am his friend. His father was a regular gentleman, with no money, but all right else—had a large family



—the soldier officer has got on uncommon well—there are four or five more on 'em; but Bill is in the clergy line: and somehow did something not quite straight and even, and so he has been rather down in the world; however, your Lordship has put him up, and great thanks to you, but—I—”

Here the orator was checked by the imperious call of the guard of the coach, by which the Mayor was about to transport himself to the country.

“I can't stop, my Lord,” said Wiseman; “I thought I'd tell you what we have heard—my missus is at top of the coach, I must not keep her waiting—but, I dare say Bill Richardson will do at Silgrove, and so—I can't stop a minute. You'll come down amongst us and contradict the report about —”

Here he was hurried away by the coach people, and Lord Snowdon was left overwhelmed. He affected to treat it as the joke of a drunken vulgar fellow; but two things were evident to himself—one, that he had been persuaded to disgrace his patronage by the promise of Silgrove to the black sheep of the Richardsons; and the other,



that the secret which he had so cautiously confided to the Oldhams had been blabbed. These two discoveries struck deep into his heart, and he resolved that the very first step of the following morning should be that of rescinding his promise to one of the Richardsons, and insisting upon the exclusion of the other. Whether he might eventually fulfil the pledge he had given of putting the lancer upon his staff, depended upon circumstances; but the communication of his half-tipsy *Master*, the Mayor of Shuttlework, had by no means tended to restore his tranquillity.

At the corner of Grosvenor-street the companions parted, and the Marquess returned to his house. He had been absent rather more than two hours; and during that period had so far relented in his violence that he rather feared than condemned the counteracting violence of his son—a violence which nothing could have justified but the tone which he had himself heard adopted towards his sister, and the certainty that she and her outraged friend, Miss Everingham, would, if they remained where



they were, be constantly subjected to the society and impertinences of Lady Katharine Oldham and her daughter.

Lord Snowdon saw the delicacy and difficulty of this last part of the proceeding, and had despatched a servant, whom he had ordered down to Brookes's (into which he went 'merely to write a letter,' for he had of late carefully abstained from the menagerie,) to Richmond, to inform Lady Katharine, that circumstances had occurred which would render it more agreeable for him to go to her than for her to come to town to him. This left him a fair field in the morning, and if he could not reconcile matters after dinner, he thought he should have the early part of the following day to bring his family matters to a favourable conclusion, delighted as he was sure all its members would be at the announcement which he should have to make to them of his magnificent appointment, certainly, and of the attainment of the blue riband in all probability.

It was here that he deeply felt and bitterly lamented the extreme difference which existed



between his own character and that of his son ; indeed, he was almost apprehensive, with *his* views and principles, that he would not feel sufficient gratification at his father's sudden and, to him, of course, unexpected aggrandizement, to overcome the filial indignation which he had so very unreservedly expressed. However, the satisfaction which, of course, Lord Malvern must feel at the acquisition to his family of new honours and new dignities, the rays of which would descend upon himself, might, perhaps, do something in the way of quelling the asperities which at the moment existed ; and if he found the ordinary manifestation of his personal and paternal authority failed to pacify the contending elements in the evening, the influence of his private domination might, perhaps, be more readily submitted to at a moment when his public importance was so very much increased.

He knocked at the door of his house with his usual confidence and dignity : he entered the hall and passed onwards to the library ; a servant lighted the candles that were on the table.



"Let Lady Hester know," said the Marquess, "that I am come in, and wish to speak to her and Lord Malvern."

"Lady Hester is not within, my Lord," said the servant.

"Where is she?"

"I don't know, my Lord," said the servant.

"Where is Lord Malvern?"

"Not here, my Lord," was the answer.

"Take my compliments to Miss Everingham, and beg her to come to me," said the Marquess.

"Miss Everingham is not here, my Lord," said the servant.

"Send Lady Hester's maid to me, Sir," said Lord Snowdon.

"Her Ladyship took her maid with her, my Lord," replied the servant. "Mr. Hall, my Lord, I believe has a letter for your Lordship."

"Send him here instantly," said the Marquess.

These announcements startled the Marquess. Had he carried his lofty authority over his children a little too far? Had the cord been so tightly strained that it had snapped? Had his



son dared to realize his intentions, and act up to his threats?

“If he have,” said the Marquess to himself, “he is a mean, unworthy scion of our house. He knows that without this accordance I cannot make a settlement on Elizabeth, and he dares me to exert not my power over his sister—for power I have none—but my influence, because if I controul her most derogatory passion, he is able to impede and thwart my happiness.”

His Lordship had scarcely concluded this brief soliloquy, when Hall entered the library.

“You have a letter for me, Hall?” said the Marquess.

“Yes, my Lord,” said Hall.

“From whom?”

“Lord Malvern, my Lord.”

“Where is Lady Hester?” asked the Marquess.

“I do not know, my Lord,” answered the servant.

“How did she go hence?”

“In Lord Malvern’s carriage, my Lord,” said Hall.



Here the colloquy ended. Hall left the room, and the Marquess proceeded to read the letter which his son had addressed to him. These were its contents :—

“ MY LORD,

“ AFTER a mature consideration of the circumstances which occurred, and the conversation which took place before your departure from Grosvenor-square, I have come to the conclusion that the removal of my sister from under your roof is the best and wisest measure I could adopt—for her sake—for your’s, and, indeed, for the sake of all of us.

“ Neither her health nor spirits are sufficiently strong to bear up against the effect of scenes similar to that of which I so strangely became a witness. The difficulties which she would have to encounter by a protracted stay in Grosvenor-square, and the discussions in which she would be engaged during the time preceding your marriage, would, in my opinion, be greatly augmented and seriously embittered by the arrival



and residence there of your future Marchioness and her mother.

“ Your right to act in whatever way you may deem most agreeable or advantageous to your own prospects, neither she nor I venture in the slightest degree to impugn; but we feel that in the position in which we are placed—Hester more particularly—that it is most desirable to avoid the possibility of a recurrence of incidents similar to that to which we have been exposed, and that it would be more candid on our parts, and more respectable in the eyes of the world, to withdraw ourselves, to make way for the new mistress of your house, and maintained, when we could do so, without effort or dissimulation, a respectful intercourse with a father, to whom we feel ourselves bound by every tie of duty consistent with the dignity and integrity of our characters, and the principles which he himself has through our lives laboured to implant in our minds.

“ It must be evident, that with the knowledge of the line Miss Oldham has chosen to adopt towards my sister, in her conversations with you,



it is wholly impossible that they could meet cordially and ingenuously as friends. Surely it is better that they should not meet at all; at least not until Miss Oldham has assumed that title and character which, for your sake, we shall feel bound to recognise and respect.

“ My beloved sister is not formed for hypocrisy or deception; and an interview between them so shortly after the knowledge of the young lady’s expressions concerning her, would produce nothing but open hostility. This was my reason for so hastily putting my plan of withdrawing Hester from your protection into execution. I am sure that I am right.

“ I ought, however, to say, that I firmly believe that I should have had more difficulty in persuading Hester to accede to my proposition for her change of residence, had not Miss Everingham positively declared, that no power should induce *her* to remain another night—another hour—under your roof. The dread of being deserted by her oldest, dearest, I may almost say, only female friend, overcame the apprehen-



sions which she naturally felt in taking so decided a step. I am the responsible person for her conduct. I am ready to vindicate and justify it to the world if called upon to do so ; and I repeat, that I am perfectly convinced I have best consulted the respectability of our family, by avoiding an *eclât*, of which we have already been sufficiently made the victims, and which must inevitably follow an open declaration of hostilities.

“ As it is, Lady Hester has done what no human being has a right to question, or any reason to marvel at. In the society of her brother and her dearest friend, she has left London for the residence of her aunt, Lady Ospringe, where she purposes remaining on a visit for some time. This announcement will neither startle nor surprise its hearers ; and as you yourself have already expressed an opinion, that her presence at your marriage would not be desirable, what better mode of disposing of her for the present could have been hit upon than that which I have ventured to adopt ; but which,



had we waited to consult you upon it, could not have been arranged in a sufficiently short space of time to prevent the meeting to-morrow, which we so little desired to take place, and which, perhaps, might have met with a serious opposition from you ?

“ As the common report is, that ministers have appointed you to the Governor-generalship of India—my authority is an officer of the — lancers, who heard it direct from a Mr. Richardson, whom, as he says, you have appointed one of your aids-du-camp—and as Hester, of course, would not accompany you to the East, it is but a brief anticipation of the ‘break-up,’ which must then take place. Let me therefore hope, that the measure which I originated, and have enforced by every possible argument, and which Hester has, under my counsel, adopted, may appear less rash and more advisable, than at the first blush you might be disposed to consider it.”

“ Ungrateful son !” said the Marquess, throwing down the letter, of which he had not yet finished the reading ; “ little did I think a child



of mine could act upon so mean a principle as Malvern here exhibits. He comes to the house of his father, excites his sister to rebellion against him, persuades her to quit his protection, and seek that of a relation whom he knows that father hates; and having done so, triumphs in the outrage, because he also knows that circumstances place that father in his power, and enable him to make his terms for a reconciliation, and name as conditions for rescuing his parent from pecuniary difficulties, the pardon of his ungrateful and undutiful children. Well; God help me!" saying which, the Marquess resumed his perusal of the epistle.

"I have already stated that I am the author of the measure. I also admit that I seriously apprehended your anger, which I now endeavour to deprecate. But lest it should be within the scale of possibility that you should imagine me capable of presuming upon the embarrassments which you have represented to me, and which it is in my power to obviate, to take such a step, I considered it just and proper, and I



hope you will consider it as an earnest of the feelings of a heart naturally devoted to you, to relieve you from all such suspicions or apprehensions. I had a duty, as I believe, to do and perform by my sister—I had a duty to perform by you;—which had the precedence, if you really know me, I think you will not doubt.

“ Before I quitted town with Hester and Miss Everingham, I called on your solicitor, whom I found literally on the point of starting for Calais to meet me with the deeds and papers necessary for my signature. In order to put you entirely at your ease with regard to the settlements, I have signed all that was necessary; and he tells me that thirty-five thousand pounds will on Monday be placed at your immediate disposal. Having relieved my mind of this, I felt comparatively happy, and doubly strengthened in my persuasions to Hester.

“ If either of us may hope to hear from you, your letter to either or both of us, will reach us, of course, at Lady Ospringe’s, where we hope to arrive, either late this evening, or, should



Hester's health require a stop on the road, early to-morrow. Believe me, I have acted for the best, and I trust we shall meet with that favour at your hands, which, until the present moment, we have never hazarded.

“MALVERN.”

These last paragraphs overcame the austerity even of Lord Snowdon—feelings alien to his bosom filled his heart—tears, strangers to his eyes, bedewed his manly cheek—it was a dreadful conflict—passions and feelings, all of different characters, were at strife within, while he himself was struggling against all !

It lasted but a short time—indeed he could not long have endured it—an effect, however, was to be produced, and when he rang the bell for his valet to come to dress him, there was no evidence of the dreadful contest left !



## CHAPTER XIV.

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THIS struggle for effect, cost the Marquess much, but it succeeded; and during the four hours which were subsequently consumed in dining with Sir Harry Winscott, (whom the reader may remember as having been too late for dinner at Lionsden,) and in the social intercourse, more brief than ever in these days of moderation, which took place subsequently, he appeared the same high and mighty, graciously condescending being as usual. It was when he returned to his home, his now solitary home, that he began to feel the effect of what had occurred within the last four and twenty hours.

Hester, his once loved child was gone—and how gone? driven from his house by harshness,



and the dreadful anticipation of greater evils yet to come. His son too was absent, under the influence of similar feelings! And although the liberal and dignified manner in which he had conducted the whole of his plan, of rescuing his sister from the ills and inconveniences with which she was assailed and threatened, demanded, as it deserved, the admiration of his father, yet the evidence which her departure from under his roof, afforded of the impotency of his authority, wounded him to the very heart.

With these thoughts in his mind, it was impossible that he should avoid the consideration of what had reduced him to a situation which he felt to be so uncomfortable. At the suggestion, or rather upon the information, flippantly given by the former play-fellow, and future mother-in-law of his child, he had been betrayed into coarseness and harshness, of which he himself felt ashamed. In his anger he had outraged and affronted the being, who for twelve or fourteen years had been the faithful protectress and friend of his daughter, and rendered it impossible for



her longer to remain an inmate of his family; this had been the work of one short hour—a work too, to which his son had been a witness.

Well! it could not be recalled; apology or retractation were out of the question. He bitterly regretted what had happened; but, if his heart had been laid open at the moment, it seems probable that the severest remorse he endured upon the subject, arose from a conviction, or at least an apprehension, that he had compromised his dignity by his violence, and exhibited those infirmities of his character, which through life he had been labouring to conceal.

He turned to another part of the family picture, and felt no very great reason to be pleased with the general appearance of things in that quarter. It was clear that Elizabeth and her mother had betrayed his confidence with regard to the Governor-generalship; it made no difference, to be sure, because the point was settled, and in eight and forty hours his nomination would be publicly announced; still he had made a point which they had disregarded: and the mention of the



aids-du-campship which he had requested them not to speak of, was another breach of confidence which annoyed him; but most of all was he annoyed, that they had prevailed upon him to bestow his valuable piece of preferment upon a person, who, if the right worshipful the Mayor of Shuttlework could be depended upon, was wholly and specially unworthy of the station in which he was to place him. All this irritated the Marquess, but made no alteration in his feelings or opinions as regarded his future wife: to the garrulous absurdity of her mother, and her disposition to exhibit her general knowledge of all subjects, he attributed these disagreeable circumstances; and resolved, the moment he saw her, to let her Ladyship feel the force of his indignation, and above all things, determined to rescue the living of Silgrove from the grasp of the ragamuffin "Bill Richardson."

The part of the transaction which puzzled him most was that, upon which it had been impossible to afford him any information: he could not imagine whence arose the pointed and decided



opposition to his marriage with Miss Oldham. Miss Everingham was on the very point of enlightening him at the moment when he so grossly affronted her : what the result of her communication would have been, it is impossible to surmise. Her feeling certainly was, that as he had now severed the tie which bound her to his family, there was no longer any necessity for keeping terms with him, and she felt convinced, that as Miss Oldham had betrayed to him the attachment of Lady Hester to Mr. Burford, she might, upon a fair principle of retaliation, shew up Miss Oldham for her former desperate flirtation with Lord Malvern.

One consideration checked her : she was conscious that she had herself entertained hopes of filling the place in the family which Elizabeth Oldham was destined so soon to occupy, and fancied the possibility of a supposition, that she had been urged to this *denouement*, by that most ungentle and unfeminine of all our passions, jealousy. This kept her silent, and left the Marquess in the dark upon that chapter of the



family history, which, as we have already seen, puzzled him the most.

In the course of worldly events, there arise at times some most curious coincidences. Generally these are matters of accident, sometimes they are aided in a slight degree by the management of individuals interested in their results. Now there is nothing very remarkable in the fact, that Lady Ospringe should have taken a house for several months at Brighton, because Brighton, from October till March is healthy, agreeable, full of company, and brilliant in sea and sunshine even in the coldest weather. As Lady Ospringe had a house at Brighton, nothing could be more natural or more convenient, than that Lord Malvern having made up his mind to the measure which we know he put in execution, should carry his injured sister and her outraged friend thither, as the most suitable and proper place for their residence under existing circumstances, and till some permanent arrangements might be made for Lady Hester's establishment; but, it certainly *was* a



curious coincidence, that the Burfords, without knowing any of these circumstances, not aware either of Lady Ospringe's residence at Brighton, or of Lord Malvern's design to carry his rescued victims to that place, and put them under her Ladyship's protection, actually removed themselves thither on the very day succeeding their arrival in town, and immediately after Charles Burford had despatched his letter to Lord Snowdon, resigning the living of Silgrove.

This was a curious coincidence, but a purely accidental one. The only help given to its occurrence, being afforded in a suggestion of Lord Malvern to Burford, that if, as he understood, his mother intended to visit the coast after her London business was concluded, he considered Brighton as the most agreeable and convenient place for the purpose; for it should be understood, that during the journey from Paris to Calais, Maria and his Lordship had formed a sort of innocent league against her mother and brother, and that in those snatches of conversation, which by occasionally detaching her



from their *surveillance* during their walks and explorations, he contrived to enjoy, she had expressed to him not only her surprise at her mother's hurried departure from Paris, but her utter disbelief in the existence of any real cause for her journey to London.

This artless and ingenuous confession of Maria's, only confirmed him in his suspicion of the real motive by which the conscientious and careful parent had been actuated in breaking up her Parisian establishment. The very caution she had observed, convinced him that he had suffered his real feelings of admiration for her daughter to betray themselves. This conviction served as the strongest possible incentive in his mind, to pursue the object which had been thus carefully withdrawn from him, and—so difficult is it to know how to manage hearts—the very plan which she had laid to prevent the formation of an attachment on the part of either of the young folks, had produced a diametrically opposite effect upon both.

When Lord Malvern arrived in London and



found the Burfords gone, the truth came home to his mind. Maria was right in her suspicions that no cause, such as her mother spoke of, existed for this journey, and therefore of course he was right in his surmises about her real reasons for having undertaken it. The Burfords had no idea of Lord Malvern's coming to England. They did not anticipate that he, jealous of his sister's honour, and resolved at all hazards to maintain her character, and support her respectability, would start for London the moment he had heard of the failure of her marriage, to obtain an explanation of Lord Elmsdale's conduct; and therefore as they literally *had* no business in London, they immediately exchanged the dusty, smoky apartments of their metropolitan hotel, for the bright sunshine and bracing air of the free and independent borough of Brighthelmstone, little dreaming that their much-loved, much-dreaded friend, would so soon become an inhabitant of it also.

The artificial part of the coincidence then amounts to this—the fact that the Burfords were



gone to Brighton, strengthened Lord Malvern in his opinion, that the best place to which he could possibly take his sister would be her aunt's residence in that watering-place; and by this wise and salutary decision, it turned out that before twenty-four hours had elapsed, Lady Hester Plinlimmon, while taking the air on the esplanade in front of Brunswick-terrace, was encountered by her friend, Mr. Charles Burford, brought thither for the express purpose, but without his own privity or consent, by her noble brother, the Right Hon. Alfred, Viscount Malvern.

If the Marquess of Snowdon, when he wrote a cold and dignified acknowledgment of his son's letter, thanked him for his conduct with regard to the settlements, and declined saying one syllable upon the subject of his daughter's removal from Grosvenor-square, had known all these additional circumstances connected with that incident, he would, perhaps, have been even more outrageous than he was, when, upon taking up the newspaper at breakfast on the very same day, he perused the following



## JEU D'ESPRIT,

*Upon the Richmond Omnibus breaking down when the Marquess  
of Snowdon was a passenger.*

The Omnibus has broken down  
With SNOWDON'S Marquess great,  
It could not carry through the town  
A man of so much weight !

QUIZ.

“ Ridiculous impertinence !” said his Lordship, crumpling the paper in his hand and dashing it upon the table—“ this is too bad—I wish I had the fellow in Bengal !”

It was with difficulty he could prevail upon himself to read another line of the journal ; he did, however, get the length of the immediately succeeding paragraph, which he found thus framed :

“ A Cabinet Council was held at the Foreign Office yesterday, immediately after the King's departure for Windsor. The Council broke up at seven o'clock ; and at half-past ten, the Ministers assembled again at the house of the Lord Privy Seal, where they remained in deliberation until nearly two o'clock this morn-



ing. We have heard several rumours as to the results of this protracted consultation, but for the present we decline giving them publicity."

"I have no doubt," said the Marquess to himself, "that the difficulty about my blue riband is greater than it at first appeared; of course, if they are hard pressed, I shall not insist—at least I can wait, and a pledge for the next ought, I think, to satisfy me. Besides, it is always well to have a little grievance to hark back to; so, upon the whole, perhaps, the delay may not be disadvantageous."

Pleased with the opportunity of exhibiting at once his power and his forbearance, the Noble Marquess continued eating his breakfast, and reading the news. His eye, however, constantly recurring to the odious bit of doggrel, which, absurd and contemptible as it was in itself, almost counterbalanced the self-satisfaction he enjoyed in the prospect of his public proceedings with the premier.

His Lordship had arranged to dine with Lady Katharine and his intended at Richmond,



having, as the reader will, perhaps, recollect, prevented their visit to town, under the impression that their meeting with Lord Malvern and Lady Hester might produce some unpleasant results; he little anticipating, at the time when he did so, that his son and daughter would of themselves relieve him from any chance of such consequences. This arrangement he still proposed to put into execution; but was most anxious to know, before he left town, the event of the previous night's discussion in cabinet, which it has been seen, with the natural vanity of man generally, and of the Marquess particularly, he attributed solely to the accumulating difficulties relating to an arrangement personal and peculiar to himself.

This last and greatest anxiety was destined soon to be terminated. While he was yet ruminating upon the past occurrences, and putting his ideas *en train* for the interview in Downing-street, a noise so loud and shrill, that even the aristocratic walls of Grosvenor-square reverberated with the sound, struck his ears; the uproar



was continued—horns blew, and newsmen bel-  
lowed. What could have happened? ‘Second  
Edition’ was all he heard; and recollecting that  
in times of excitement, some of the newspapers  
were in the habit of publishing a second edition,  
which merely announced the intention of the  
editors subsequently to publish a third, he little  
heeded the cry. But his attentive servants  
anticipated the wishes which he was too dignified  
to express, and the “Second edition” was laid  
upon his table. He took it up, and read:—

“ We publish a second edition to announce  
to our readers the important fact of the resig-  
nation of Ministers. In the Cabinet which we  
stated to have been held yesterday afternoon, and  
at the subsequent meeting in the evening, which  
we also announced, it was determined that it was  
no longer possible for the present Ministers to  
carry on the Government. In consequence of this  
decision, the Premier and the Lord Chancellor  
left town at an early hour this morning, and  
tendered their resignations, which his Majesty  
has been pleased to accept; and we understand



that Lord Salford has been sent for to take the King's commands on forming a new administration."

This seemed to be the *coup de grâce*. Could it be? What! go out of office without completing his appointment—without securing him his blue riband! What a game had he been playing!—sacrificing his principles and consistency, abandoning his friends and his party, just sufficiently to be disappointed of the two great objects of his life, and that too at the moment when his friend and relation was sent for by the King to make a ministry, in which, if he had only been consistent and patient, he might have filled any office he had chosen to select, and have under their domination obtained an extra blue riband by a dispensation of the statutes, if he could not have got one in the ordinary course by the dispensations of Providence.

This history the Marquess in his heart believed to be "a weak invention of the enemy;" it could not be possible that his dear friend the Premier could have resigned without either first



consulting him who had made such sacrifices, or, at all events, securing the objects of his ambition from his successors; besides, of course he must have heard of it from better authority than a common newspaper. Psha ! it was ridiculous !

His incredulity, however, was not sufficiently well grounded to overcome his anxiety, and he hastened forth upon an early walk in order to glean the news from the best quarters, or perhaps draw it from the fountain head. If any thing could have been wanting to complete his worries and embarrassments, this last blow was *it* ; and when he sallied out of Grosvenor-square he was in a state of excitement comical enough to those who were wholly independent of him, but terrible indeed to those who happened to be within the sphere of his influence, or under the power of his controul.

More tranquilly and peaceably passed the morning at Brighton; but perhaps the events which occurred during the next twenty-four hours on the margin of the sea, taken as affecting the interests of the Plinlimmons, were not



less important than those which had turned up in the metropolis.

Lady Ospringe, who always treated the Marquess of Snowdon exactly as he disliked being treated, had a long conversation with her niece, Lady Hester, after her return from the walk in which, to her utter astonishment, she had been joined by her brother and Mr. Burford. Lady Hester, unused to the mild and gentle treatment which she experienced from her aunt upon this occasion—her Ladyship having been previously apprised of the real state of Lady Hester's heart by Lord Malvern—confided to her the real truth, and admitted the existence, in all its earliest strength, of an attachment to Burford; at the same time confessing the difficulty in which she unexpectedly found herself placed by his accidental visit to Brighton, at the moment which Lord Malvern had fixed upon for his retreat thither from Grosvenor-square.

“My dear Hester,” said Lady Ospringe, “in this world there are no accidents so frequent as those which happen on purpose. Set your heart



at rest about the delicacy and difficulty of your situation. Your brother knows your real feelings: he is determined that you shall marry the object of your choice; and I, who consider your father's conduct through life in a very different manner from that in which you estimate it, am quite satisfied that Malvern is right. He has obtained for himself, as we hear, high rank and great honours, and he has chosen to unite himself with a girl younger than his daughter, without consulting her views or"—

"Oh, no, Lady Ospringe," said Lady Hester, "it is I who have marred all his prospects and overturned his arrangements: he never would have married until after I had been married, but for this untoward circumstance"—

"Now, dear Hester," said the warm-hearted Lady Ospringe, "will you tell me the truth—will you answer me two questions?—I only ask two."

"Yes, aunt," said Lady Hester, "I promise you I will."

"Well, then, first," said Lady Ospringe, "you do *not* love Lord Elmsdale?"



"No," said Lady Hester, with an emphasis the most unequivocal.

"You *do* love Charles Burford?—What! no answer? Come, let me give you some encouragement to speak," said Lady Ospringle; "if you do, I can only tell you this:—I am rich enough to make a daughter more than happy in marriage with the man to whom she is attached. Hester dear, it was so *I* married. I know what the blessings of domestic happiness are, and I have seen abundance of instances of the misery of ill-assorted matches. That your marriage with Mr. Burford can be so considered, I do not see; for it is not probable that such a man as *your* father and my brother-in-law would have selected an individual to direct the future career of his son through life without having a high opinion of his merits and character. I have no daughter—no child, Hester, and it has always been my intention to make you my heir. How much more agreeable will it be to me, to see you happy before I die, than to die in the hope only that you may be so afterwards. Your own fortune



would be ample for all comfort in this marriage; but, in the first instance, I will double it—only however upon one condition, that when you are Lady Hester Burford you will make this your home, and trust to the affections of your mother's sister, rather than to those of the flighty second wife of your lofty father."

"My dear aunt," said Lady Hester, "you are opening a prospect to me so very different"—

"—And so very agreeable," said Lady Ospringle. "Come, speak the truth, dearest—you *have* promised;—when I tell you that my mind is fixed upon the completion of this affair, and that you will secure *my* happiness by accepting my offer, perhaps I may encourage you to make a declaration."

"I cannot speak," said Lady Hester, who, unused to kindness, and overcome by her feelings, threw her arms round her aunt's neck and burst into tears.

As far as poor Lord Snowdon's views for "Hester dear," went, it seems tolerably evident



that they were considerably damaged. But it is necessary for us to look at another part of Brighton during this same morning, where a scene of equally vital interest, but of a totally different character, was enacting, but which as deeply involved some of the personages of the same drama.

The delight of Lady Ospringe, who with all her rank and wealth and influence, felt that she could secure her beloved niece from the ill effects of her father's frowns, and satisfied that she should ensure her happiness by eventually uniting her to the man she loved, was weak in comparison with the pain and affliction of the amiable Mrs. Burford, who found herself, and her daughter, and her son, brought unconsciously and without the slightest previous intention, or concert, or agreement, into immediate contact and connexion with the persons of all others whom she was most anxious to avoid.

Some there are, no doubt, who will deny the credit of such a feeling as that which Mrs. Burford is here represented to entertain, and



think that the anxiety she evinced to be rid of the association with Lord Malvern was merely affected, because it would seem that the union of her daughter with a man so placed in the world would be most desirable; but they are wrong:—a father, a calculating man, might have felt this desire and concealed it; and that there are mothers—as witness Lady Katharine Oldham—who, with all the professions of allowing their daughters to choose for themselves—of course under certain limitations—proceed not only to the fair measure of preaching them into marrying for interest against their will, but the whole length of manual correction to enforce their decrees, is not to be denied; but really and truly Mrs. Burford was not one of these.

To say that her daughter's being Marchioness of Snowdon would be disagreeable to her, would be to say that which is not true. What she desired to avoid was exposing her child—a girl full of feeling, of admiration for the sort of talent and accomplishments which Lord Malvern possessed, to the possibility of forming an attach-



ment, a happy result to which their relative positions in society rendered nearly impossible ; and as we have seen, besides her affection for her daughter, she possessed a dignity of character and independence of spirit, which led her of all things most studiously to avoid any thing which might possibly be construed into the assumption of an undue influence over the mind of a young nobleman, violently excited at the moment against his father, and not less against his future mother-in-law by the most extraordinary combination of circumstances.

These were the feelings which actuated this exemplary woman ; but what were her sensations when she discovered, for the first time, that beyond her influence and without her knowledge, an engagement in a precisely similar degree to that which she so much dreaded, absolutely existed between her son and Lord Malvern's sister. It was the first time that she had heard of it, and it was disclosed to her by Lord Malvern himself in the absence of Burford, who, after the return of Lady Hester to her



aunt's, had, at the express desire of his mother, taken his sister out for a "long walk" on the cliff.

Mrs. Burford's object in planning this excursion was to have the opportunity of speaking to Lord Malvern on the subject of his—to her extraordinary conduct—in contriving (which he had evidently done) a meeting at Brighton between her son and his sister. The conversation in which she at last succeeded in engaging his Lordship took place, singularly enough, at the same time at which Lady Ospringe and Lady Hester were occupied in that dialogue of a somewhat similar nature which has just been recorded.

"Lord Malvern," said Mrs. Burford, "I am sure you will give me credit for being an affectionate parent; it is an anxious attachment for my child which emboldens me to speak to you to-day, and the very decided part you have taken renders it necessary I should speak out."

"My dear Mrs. Burford, say what you please," said Lord Malvern; "I am ready to vindicate the



course I have pursued, and in which I am much strengthened by the countenance of my warm-hearted aunt, with whom, by the way, I am instructed to invite you and Maria to dine."

"Lord Malvern," said Mrs. Burford, "you must first hear me. Charles is, I am sure, worthy and honourable, and excellent in conduct and principles; but indeed, Lord Malvern, you are incurring a heavy responsibility in encouraging the idea of his becoming a connexion of your family. Your father"——

——"Upon that point," said Lord Malvern, "my mind is made up. Hester and I have, through the medium of Lady Ospringe, received such incontrovertible evidence of my father's lamentable blindness with regard to the connexion he is forming, and at the same time such decided proofs of his unalterable resolution to fulfil his engagement, that we are totally cast off to seek our own fortunes. I have no desire to flatter *you*, nor to overrate Charles; but I know him to the very heart's core, and a more noble-minded, high-spirited gentleman does not exist on



the face of the earth. My sister loves him ; she was ready to sacrifice her affection to obedience, but nature prevailed, and she sank under the effort. My father, tutored by those who hate us, and seek to gain all possible influence over him, has widened the breach between us past all hope of a re-union. I therefore become the guardian of my sister's honour and happiness ; and she has confided enough to me to make me know how the one is to be maintained and the other secured ; therefore will I not hear a word more about it. I am not going to press the affair, or hurry it on ; nor would it be right or proper that she should, for some time, enter into any such engagement as marriage until all the *eclât* of Lord Elmsdale's affair has blown over ; but sanctioned as my views are by the sister of her mother, Lady Hester please God, shall be, the wife of your son."

" You speak strongly, Lord Malvern," said Mrs. Burford, " and I really know not what to oppose to your proposition upon any ground but one. Your father, let him act as he may, i



still your father; and only consider what his feelings will be when he knows that my son is the husband of his daughter."

"His feelings!" said Lord Malvern, "those we know already, because that heartless traitor in love and friendship, Miss Elizabeth Oldham, has put him in possession of the truth, as far as Hester's feelings go; and, as my father knows, when once the heart and mind of a woman are won, all the rest is but a secondary consideration in the 'book of fate.'"

"I admit that," said Mrs. Burford, "he may know what *her* feelings are, but I should anticipate much more serious results, if he found her Ladyship married to the son of a poor clergyman, that son having previously been the object of his bounty and patronage."

"Do you know," said Lord Malvern, with a half comic, half malicious smile on his lip, "*I* have thought of that; but I have also hit upon a remedy for the evil—it struck me that the Marquess might think it, in his phraseology, beneath Lady Hester Plinlimmon to marry the



son of Mrs. Burford. What do you think I have done, in order to check this disposition to run my friend Charles down?"

"I cannot imagine," said the old lady.

"Why, I have resolved," said his Lordship, "to make it sound better, by contriving, with your permission and that of one other person, yet to be obtained, that Lady Hester, instead of marrying the son of the late Rev. Thomas Burford, shall unite herself to Charles Burford, the brother of the Right Hon. Viscountess Malvern."

"I don't comprehend you," said Mrs. Burford.

"You will, perhaps, understand it all, this evening at my aunt's," said Lord Malvern.

"My dear Mrs. Burford, I am resolved. I flatter myself that Maria will not object to this plan; and if she approve of it, I shall be made the happiest of men!"

"My Lord," said Mrs. Burford, bursting into tears, "as Heaven is my witness, this is the event I most dreaded—this"——

"Oh! yes," said Lord Malvern, "this



is the event which conjured up a law-suit in London, was to carry you off by the diligence, and did actually put you in the metropolis, out of which you were in so great a hurry to get, that I discovered the whole scheme. You are an excellent mother, and will make me an excellent mother-in-law—provided always that Maria”——

What a coincidence—at this word the charming girl and her brother entered the room.

“Here she is,” continued Lord Malvern, “to speak for herself.”

“My mother in tears !” said Maria; “what has happened ?”

“Maria,” said Lord Malvern, “she cannot bear the thoughts of parting from you.”

“I hope” said Miss Burford, “there is no chance of her being tried upon that point.”

“It is one,” said Lord Malvern, “upon which I have no intention of trying her at this particular moment. I now content myself, my dear girl, with conveying an invitation to you from my aunt to dine with her. Oh !” said he, seeing that she looked towards her mother—



“Mamma and all—she has already accepted—and you Charles, with whom, if you please, I will now take a stroll, allowing that dear sister of yours to hear from her exemplary mother’s lips the determination that I have expressed, and which no power on earth, if she consent, will prevent my fulfilling. Remember, ladies, at seven my carriage shall call for you.”

Saying which, Lord Malvern walked out of the room with his future brother-in-law, leaving the mother to communicate the conversation that had passed, to her daughter, in which interesting *tête-à-tête*, we must leave them for the present, just to see how matters are going on in London.

“All true, by Jove! all true!” said Lord Massingberg to the Marquess, whom he met at the corner of Bruton-street; “out—all out! the thing’s done—must be a dissolution—how do you stand—eh?”

The question was a most awkward one. The Marquess had made every disposition for fulfilling all the conditions of his ratting. All his old principles were changed, all his new poli-



tical arrangements had been made, and having, after five-and-twenty years' adherence to a losing party, quitted them just as they were coming into power, he had the satisfaction of finding himself deprived of the reward for his apostasy, and so fettered by circumstances, as to be obliged to continue his opposition to his friends at the approaching election, with the certainty of getting nothing on earth from their enemies.

It was all too clear—dirty-faced fellows, who neither shaved nor wore clean shirts diurnally, were to be seen smirking and junketing about the streets. Octogenarians, laid on the shelf half a century before, were to be found tottering and toddling down to Westminster; while the carriages of the aspirants to high office, were rolling about at the tails of the unpaid-for job horses, which had, for many a-year before, done nothing but drag them down to Brookes's, or lug them over the heavy western-road, as far as that suburban relic of antiquity, which has been so graphically described by the late Lord Byron.

This seemed to be the *acmé* of the Marquess's



misery and discomfiture. His Governor-generalship was gone—his friends, like a suddenly-retiring army, had left their heavy baggage behind them—they had séoured nothing—it was an unconditional surrender—and as to the blue riband, that was lost in company with the oriental vice-royalty.

There was no hope for him—of that, he was certain. What effect would this extraordinary disappointment have upon his dear Elizabeth? To be sure he had no controul over events; all he had said to her of his appointment, he was justified in saying; and besides as it was, there *was* some consolation even in his defeat. Elizabeth had expressed a dislike for India, and avowed her preference of “dear old Lionsden,” to the more gaudy and distinguished splendour of Calcutta; *that* was something, and besides, there was another something, which, if possible, was yet more highly gratifying to him—he should get rid of the association with Mr. Frederick Richardson, the self-proclaimed aid-du-camp.

The mind, even such a mind as Lord Snow-



don's, is charmingly elastic; he was stung to the quick by the overthrow of his hopes and expectations, and by the remorse which his venal and useless tergiversation could not fail to excite; but still, there were domestic life, and quiet enjoyment before him. What were golden thrones and fawning slaves to the quiet bowers of Lionnden, and the fascinating society of his beloved Elizabeth! One thing was above all others certain, that having now secured from his son's liberality the financial part of his credentials, and being ready to conclude the settlement upon his future wife, (having severed every tie between himself and his family,) the sooner he married the better.

Previous, therefore, to his departure for Richmond, he proceeded to his solicitor, and gave him instructions for the immediate arrangement of all the necessary documents; and having concluded some other affairs of business, threw himself into his travelling carriage, and started for the home of his beloved, in whose society alone, he now felt that he could forget the annoyances by



which in every other sphere he could not fail to be haunted.

It *was* an annoyance, the just reward, it is true, of the fast and loose principle upon which he had been acting, and the undecided, shilly-shally game which he had been playing; but still his situation was one of peculiar hardship.—Another week, perhaps another day, and he would have been all that he had ever wished to be. Now, he returned to the mansion of his betrothed, shorn of the honours which he had assumed, deprived of the patronage of which he had boasted, convinced too, that as he must *per force* annul the appointment of Mr. Frederick Richardson to the aid-du-campship, it would be perfectly impossible for him to rescind his promise of the living of Silgrove, to his reverend and disreputable brother “Bill.”

Away went the horses, and away went the Marquess, laid back in his carriage and hidden from the public gaze, which, by the way, was not directed towards him. No object attracted his attention during the whole *trajet*, except indeed



the spot never to be forgotten by him on Barnes Common, where he had ventured into that dreadful receptacle for the living from which he had been so painfully ejected in St. James's-street.

Richmond achieved, the hill partly mounted, the Marquess was at the door of Lady Katharine's extremely pretty villa: the carriage was opened, and out sprang, (with an effort, it must be confessed,) the matured yet expectant lover.

He entered the house—all seemed silent—Elizabeth was not singing—the dogs were not barking—the grim grey governess was not playing waltzes, nor, strangest of all, was Lady Katharine talking; one or two servants whom his Lordship encountered, slunk out of the way; and Miss Oldham's maid, who was looking over the ballusters of the gallery into the hall, rushed into one of the bed-rooms which opened into it, the moment she caught Lord Snowdon's eye.

The Marquess proceeded to the drawing-room, nobody was there—in the *boudoir*—nobody—in the billiard-room, nobody. "Happy circum-



stance," thought his Lordship, "Mr. Frederick Richardson is absent to-day at least; and besides getting rid of his frivolity and impertinence, I shall escape the horror of being obliged to explain to *him*, why I cannot fulfil my promise of putting him on my staff."

His Lordship promenaded the rooms—looked at himself in every glass, even in a small round one in a green morocco case, which lay upon one of the three hundred and sixty-five well covered tables, which were scattered about the apartments.

A servant entered the *boudoir*, and mentioned that Lady Katharine would be down as soon as possible.

"Is Miss Oldham at home?" said the Marquess.

"I don't know, I am sure, my Lord," said the man, with an expression of countenance which clearly indicated that he did.

The Marquess sauntered to a sofa, and took up a newspaper; there it was again! the same infernal "*jeu d'esprit*" upon his tumble in the



omnibus. He seized the journal and stuffed it into his pocket, hoping by this magnanimous act, to check the circulation of his disgrace through the servants' hall, and housekeeper's room, as if all the underlings of the household, did not make a point of reading the newspapers long before they permitted Lady Katharine to see them.

After a considerable delay, for which he could not account, Lady Katharine's maid appeared, with her eyes very red indeed, and begged his Lordship to come up to her Lady's room.

"What, is Lady Katharine ill?" said his Lordship.

"Ill, my Lord?" said the maid; "nothing can be worse. You got my Lady's letter, my Lord?"

"Letter! no—what letter?" said the Marquess.

"My Lady will tell you all herself—oh, dear! oh, dear!" said the unhappy *soubrette*, "what shall we do?"

The Marquess, considerably mystified by all



these appearances, and thinking, by Elizabeth's non-appearance, that her mother was seriously ill, followed the "lovely Thais" who "led the way" in considerable anxiety; not that he would have cared in the slightest degree if Lady Katharine had been gathered to her fathers or mothers that very day, except inasmuch as such an event as her death, would naturally postpone that, for the immediate occurrence of which he was now so anxious. He entered the apartment redolent with Eau à Bruler, Eau de Cologne, and all the "perfumes of Arabia."

"Lady Katharine," said the Marquess, approaching the bed upon which her Ladyship lay extended, "this is a sorry sight: I trust you are not seriously ill?"

"Oh, my dear Lord!" said Lady Katharine; "leave the room, Hobkirk—shut the door—go away! What am I to do? what am I to say? I remember well enough—I was very young at the time, when my poor grandmother, Lady Manningtree—she was the sister, you know, my Lord, of the famous Sir Tilbury Todd—that



man who—oh, dear me, what shall I do?—I don't know—as poor dear Doctor Simpson used to tell me—yet what can I say?”

“What is the matter?” said the Marquess, knowing that he must wait for the unravelment of the history in her own fashion.

“Matter!” continued Lady Katharine, “oh, that girl!—well—Elizabeth, to be sure, I never could have thought it!—though I do recollect old Mrs. Bamfoozle, of Dragelthorp—the place her husband bought of my poor uncle George—she afterwards married Lees, the great wine merchant. By the way, he failed for four hundred thousand pounds, and paid sixteen and ninepence in the pound—she used to say to me—oh, dear me—what *shall* I do?”

“But, dear Lady Katharine, what is it?” said Lord Snowdon, “where is Elizabeth?”

“Elizabeth!” screamed Lady Katharine, in a voice emulative of the largest and boldest peacock that ever announced bad weather, “oh! that's it!—oh, that girl!—dear Lord Snowdon, what can I do?—she's gone, gone!”



“Gone whither?” said the Marquess.

“Oh! I never thought it!” sobbed her Ladyship; “I’m sure that Frederick Richardson—oh! I believe it was all that Mr. Losh! and only to think, his great aunt was maid of honour to Queen Charlotte!—oh! yes, and his father an eminent merchant in Liverpool. By the way, that rail-road—but I must not think of that now—twenty miles an hour—but”——

“Yes! but what of Elizabeth?” repeated his Lordship.

“Oh! then,” said Lady Katharine, “you didn’t get my letter? dear me! I sent it by Robert the groom—that man never failed me before—I had him from Colonel Windmill, your friend, Lord Snowdon—with a very good character. By the way, his wife told me—but never mind—Elizabeth is gone, my dear Lord!”

“Gone where, I ask?” repeated the Marquess.

“Oh! Heaven knows,” said her mother; “you killed her with talking about India. By the way, if you never had got that appointment, you would not have lost her: she could not bear



the tigers, and the ships, and the hyenas, and the nabobs, and all that. Mr. Anderson, of Cockelford, told her such a story of a kangaroo"——

"Lost Elizabeth !" said the Marquess, "how lost her ?"

"She's gone, my dear Lord ! ruined past redemption !" — said Lady Katharine, "run away with Frederick Richardson last night—by the way, what a night it was for them—rained so hard—I"——

"What, eloped !"

"Exactly," replied Lady Katharine ; "gone for good—how or which way, Heaven knows ! She left me a note—it is enclosed in my letter to you—describing her horror at the match. I ought to have known it would not answer, Frederick and she were such friends. To be sure, as Mr. Losh said—but the"——

"Madam !" said the Marquess, "am I to understand—for I can understand very little you say—that *your* daughter, *my* intended wife, has eloped with Mr. Frederick Richardson ?"

"That's it," said Lady Katharine ; "what a



deal of trouble you have saved me ; yes—that's the whole of it—as Shakspeare says, ' brevity is the soul of wit,' and"—

" Wit ! Madam," said the Marquess, " what do you mean by wit ? are you in your senses, and venture to trifle with me under such circumstances ?"

" Trifle !" said Lady Katharine, " I have no desire to trifle, I tell you the truth—and that my poor dear mother used to say—by the way, she was one of the first women who left off wearing powder—she used to say"—

" I have not the slightest inclination to hear what she used to say, Ma'am," said the Marquess ; " it seems that I have no farther business here at any rate. I conclude I shall find your letter in Grosvenor-square when I return. That I am surprised at such a gross and glaring want of taste in your daughter, I admit, but do not suffer yourself to believe, Ma'am, that I am in the slightest degree mortified."

" Oh ! I dare say not," said Lady Katharine ; " the truth is, as my uncle George used to say—



he poor dear man, lost his leg at Walcheren—by the way, what a lamentable affair that was——”

“Madam! I cannot any longer listen to this gibberish,” said the Marquess; “your daughter must be mad.”

“So all girls are when they are in love,” said her Ladyship; “she cares about nothing but pleasing herself, as Miss Everingham told her—dear good soul she is—that when Lord Malvern was himself so desperately in love with her”——

“Malvern! in love with whom, Ma’am?” said the Marquess.

“Elizabeth!” said Lady Katharine.

“My son! Ma’am,” said Lord Snowdon, “is it possible that I have only now discovered—and that at the moment in which I least expected it—the cause of the apparently groundless hostility of Malvern to my marriage with your daughter? is it possible that human nature can be so depraved! that you, conscious as you must have been, by the confession you have this instant made, of the existence of such a feeling on the part of Alfred, should have sanctioned the nego-



ciations which have been going on for the bestowal of her hand upon *me*, and which are only now, providentially I must say, broken off, by her own repugnance to so unnatural an union?"

"Oh, dear!" said Lady Katharine, "you are quite mistaken! she never cared for Malvern—never a bit—but she was desperately in love with Frederick Richardson; and so—"

"Frederick, Ma'am," said the Marquess, repeating the word in a tone precisely similar to that in which she uttered it, and wholly unconscious in his rage of either what he spoke or acted, "it is clear that I have been made a dupe, and you, my Lady Katharine, have been an accessory to the fraud! Console yourself with the reflection, that while you have successfully marred the happiness of myself and my family, you have ruined the prospects of your own. I hope never to hear more of you so long as I live; for upon earth there are no two characters more despicable in themselves, or more hateful to me, than those of a heartless young woman, and a frivolous old one!"



Saying which his Lordship bounced out of the room, and hurrying down stairs, strode across the hall out of the door, out of the gates, out of the grounds, and away to the Star and Garter, (a sign under which, although destined temporarily to live there, it did not appear he had been born,) where his horses and carriage had been put up, and whence, in a few minutes, he took his departure for London.

Upon his arrival in Grosvenor-square, he found the letter from Lady Katharine, to which she had alluded, enclosing the note which Miss Oldham had left upon a table in her dressing-room. Lady Katharine's epistle was brief, blotted, unconnected, and nearly illegible. Elizabeth's was written with no appearance of trepidation, but was all as soft, shining, and sweet-smelling as ever; it was concise but to the purpose :—

“ MY DEAREST MAMMA,

“ YOU will be surprised at the step I have taken. Before this reaches you I shall be far



on my way to become the wife of Frederick Richardson. His pride was wounded, and his feelings were strongly excited by the abrupt, and I must say, coarse manner in which 'Old Snow' snapped him up at dinner the other day—it disgusted *me*; and when I found that I was to be transported to India, of which I have such a horror, I took Frederick's opinion, and we resolved to moderate our expectations, and be happy in mutual affection. We shall make it out, I have no doubt, and I feel myself quite fit to be a soldier's wife. You must soften the Marquess's rage. Frederick has got six weeks' leave of absence, and you must not expect to see me until that period is expired, by which time the Governor-general will be gone to his empire.

“ You, my dearest mamma, will, I am convinced, forgive me, and assure yourself, that what I have done, however imprudent it may at first appear, is the best and wisest step I could have taken. Adieu, you shall hear the moment I am married, for I shall want a million of things,



which, of course, I had neither time nor opportunity to bring away with me.

“Your’s, affectionately,

“E. O.”

This note, so characteristic of the flippant writer, and so clearly explanatory of the nature of her feelings towards Lord Snowdon,—some-what, as it appeared, incautiously forwarded to his Lordship,—consummated the violence of his rage; and while it did so, must exhibit to the reader, the providential ill success of such heartless trickery. Had Elizabeth Oldham been what Lord Malvern once thought her, she would have become the wife of a man who loved her, and whom she seemed to love, and have been Marchioness of Snowdon into the bargain. As it was, she had recorded herself a heartless coquette in the first instance, and a mercenary hypocrite in the second; winding up her base career by becoming the wife of a needy coxcomb, who, in less than three years from their



marriage, had dissipated his small fortune on the turf and at the gaming-table, and had gone upon half-pay, receiving the difference, which half-pay he eventually commuted at a price commensurate with his embarrassments, rather than the real value of the income it produced.

Lord Snowdon threw down the letter—and defeated in his public career, baffled in private life, at once the victim and dupe of his passion and pretensions, felt a misery of which he had never before been conscious. Whither was he to turn for succour or for consolation? For the sake of this worthless girl—at one time the pretender to his son's affections—he had broken up his establishment and scattered his family. The very circumstances which had been communicated to him by Lady Katharine, in a great measure justified Malvern's hostility to the match, which before he had been apprized of them, he could neither comprehend nor forgive.

To Lady Hester, as we have seen, the Marquess was decidedly attached; he was proud of



her, as well indeed he might be; and although his heart relented not in her favour, because she had rejected Lord Elmsdale, or, at least, had induced his abdication by the violent expression of her feelings, yet he could not but repent of the harsh and cutting language which he had used to her, at the suggestion of, and upon information furnished him, by her who once had been her dearest friend, but who was now one of her bitterest enemies.

That he must do something, was absolutely necessary: he availed himself of the favourable moment when his feelings had the mastery of his passion—for in fact he had but one—and resolved to proceed to Brighton; his anger towards his son being greatly subdued, and his resentment against his daughter very much moderated. That plan he put into execution, and reached Lady Ospringe's residence in the evening of the day on which the party invited, as the reader knows, was assembled round her hospitable board.

It is not permitted to us to know the results



of this meeting ; but after what has already been communicated to the reader, he may feel pretty certain that the arrangements made by the young people were eventually concluded as they had originally proposed. Nothing seems wanting to complete the triumph which nature and truth had achieved over the vanities of the world, and the deceptions of the heartless and unprincipled, but the eventual marriage of Lord Snowdon to the ill-used Anne Everingham. That such an event did actually take place, we cannot positively say ; but this we know, that all the events of our little history tend most instructively to prove the value of the warning which Massinger gives in these admonitory lines :—

“ Take heed of Pride, and cautiously consider  
How brittle the foundation is, on which  
You labour to advance it.”

THE END.



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